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Dedication

aṁśāṁśastu marīcyādhiraṁśā brahmādayastathā ।
kalāḥ kapilakūrmādyā aveśābhārgavāda yaḥ ॥
pūrṇo nṛsiṁho rāmaśca śvetadvīpādhipo hariḥ ।
vaikuṁṭho'pi tathā yajño naranārāyaṇaḥ smṛtaḥ ॥
paripūrṇatamaḥ sākṣāt śrīkṛṣṇo bhagavān svayaṁ ।
asaṁkhyāka brahmāṇḍa patirgo-goloke dhāmni rājate ॥

Marīci and other sages are aṁśāṁśa avatāras (fragmental portions of the portions). Lord Brahmā and others are aṁśa avatāras (portional incarnations). Kapila, Kūrma and others are kalā avatāras (incarnations with specific empowered aspects). Paraśurāma is an āveśa avatāra (empowered incarnation). Nṛsiṁha, Rāma, Śvetadvīpādhipati (Lord Nārāyaṇa), Vaikuṇṭhapati (Lord Viṣṇu), Yajña, and Nara-Nārāyaṇa are pūrṇa avatāras (complete incarnations). Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the paripūrṇatama avatāra (the most complete, original form of the Supreme Lord). The master of innumerable universes, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, resides in Goloka Dhāma. (Garga Saṁhitā, Goloka Kāṇḍa, Prathama Adhyāya, Śloka 16–18)

I dedicate this scripture to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-ācārya of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness (ISKCON), who tirelessly preached the glories of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa worldwide revealing His real identity as mentioned in the above verse, and to his dedicated disciple, my revered spiritual master, His Holiness Bhakti Vikāsa Swami Mahārāja.

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Contents

Foreword xi

Preface xiii

1. Pastimes of Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara - 1 1

From the Bhaviṣyottara Purāṇa 1

2. Pastimes of Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara - 2 30

From the Skanda Purāṇa.....30

3. Services and Sacred sites at Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara temple 43

4. The Festivals of Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara 69

5. Veṅkaṭācala (Tirumalā Parvata) 79

6. Sacred Places at Tirumalā 89

Swami Puṣkariṇī's Glory 89
The Story of Lord Varāha's temple 94
The Story of the 97
Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara temple 97
Gollā Maṇḍap.....98
Tirumala Nambi temple (Residence) 100
Anantācārya Vṛndāvan (Samādhi).....100
Tarigonda Veṅgamāmbā Vṛndāvan (Samādhi)...101
Hāthīrām Bābājī Vṛndāvan (Samādhi).....102
The Glory of Ākāśagaṅgā Tīrtha.....103
The Glory of Jābāli Tīrtha.....104
The Glory of Pāpanāśana Tīrtha.....105
The Glory of Cakra Tīrtha 107
Śrīvāri Pādālu
(Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's Sacred Footprints) 108
Glory of Rāma-Kṛṣṇa Tīrtha.....109

Kumāradhārā Tīrtha's Glory.....110
Tumburu (Gona) Tīrtha's Glory.....112
Glory of Pāṇḍava Tīrtha.....113

7. Sacred places in Tīrupati..... 115

Lord Govindarāja temple.....115
Lord Kodaṇḍarāma temple.....118
Kapila Tīrtha.....120
ISKCON Rādhā Govinda temple.....121
In Alipiri, the Śrī Vārī Pādālu (Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's Footprints).....131
Padmāvati Devi temple - Padma Sarovara.....131
Śrīnivāsa Maṅgāpuram.....135
Suvarṇamukhārī (Svarṇa Mukhī) River and Agastyeśvara temple.....136

8. Āḻvārs' Hymns in Praise of Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara..... 139

Śrī Poyīgai Āḻvār.....139
Śrī Pūdatta Āḻvār.....141
Śrī Pey Āḻvār.....142
Śrī Tirumaḻiśai Āḻvār.....144
Śrī Nammāḻvār.....147
Śrī Kulaśekhara Āḻvārs.....149
Śrī Periyā Āḻvār.....151
Śrī Tiruppāṇ Āḻvār.....152
Śrī Tirumangai Āḻvār.....152
Śrī Godā Devī (Āṇḍāl).....155

9 . The Pastimes of Pure Devotees in Tirumalā .. 157

Śrī Yāmunācārya.....157
Śrī Tirumala Nambi.....158

Śrī Kāñcīpūrṇa (Tirukkacchi Nambi) 160
Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya 163
Śrī Anantācārya.....170
Śrī Vedānta Deśikan 180
Śrī Prativādi Bhayaṅkara Aṇṇan.....183
Śrī Annamācārya 186
Śrīpādarāja Tīrtha (Śrīpādarāyalu) 198
Śrī Vyāsa Tīrtha 199
Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu.....200
Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu 204
Śrī Vallabhācārya.....205
Śrī Vādīrāja Tīrtha.....206
Śrī Purandara Dāsa 207
Śrī Hāthīrām Bābājī 208
Śrī Kanak Dāsa 211
Śrī Rāghavendra Swami 212
Śrīkṛṣṇa Deva Rāya 213
Bhakta Śīromaṇi Tarigoṇḍa Veṅgamāmbā 213
Śrī Tyāgarāju 217
His Divine Grace Śrī Śrīmad A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda 218

Acknowledgement 225
About Author..... 227
Guide map of sacred places in Tirupati 228
Guide map of sacred places in Tirumala 229
A Guide Map of the Prominent Sites in the Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara Temple 230
List of Prominent Sites in the Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara Temple 231

Foreword

Before beginning this sacred text, I offer my respectful obeisances to my spiritual master, His Holiness Bhakti Vikāsa Swami Mahārāja, to all the devotees of the Lord, and to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His various incarnations.

A government-appointed postman may not be perfect, but the letter he delivers can still bring great benefit to the recipient. Similarly, I may not be perfect, but the message I am delivering is pure, as it comes through the guru-paramparā (disciplic succession), is validated by the śāstras (scriptures), and, as such, is complete and perfect. I hope that by accepting this message, you will derive immense spiritual benefit.

In composing this text, references have been drawn from the Bhaviṣyottara Purāṇa, Skanda Purāṇa, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Varāha Purāṇa, various Śrī Vaiṣṇava texts, and scriptures from the Tirumalā Tirupati Devāsthānam.

This is only an introduction to the Veṅkaṭācala Māhātmya. There is so much more in the Vedic scriptures about Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, but I do not possess sufficient qualification to fully glorify Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. We have tried our best to glorify Bālājī, yet we could present only a summary, and there might be some discrepancies.

We humbly request our readers to point out any mistakes so that we may correct them in future editions. For further reading, we highly recommend His Grace Revati Ramana Prabhu's upcoming book on Lord Bālājī,

which is scheduled for publication in the near future. He has been diligently working on this project for over fifteen years.

We pray that this humble effort brings spiritual benefit to all sincere seekers.

Preface

nārāyaṇaṁ namaskṛtya naraṁ caiva narottamam ।
devīṁ sarasvatīṁ vyāsaṁ tato jayam udīrayet ॥

First, I offer my respectful obeisances to Lord Nārāyaṇa, sage Nara-Nārāyaṇa, the goddess of knowledge, Sarasvatī, and the great sage Vedavyāsa. (Mahābhārata, Ādiparva, Chapter 1, Verse 1)

The Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara temple is a significant Vaiṣṇava temple located in Tirumalā,[1] in the Tirupati district of Āndhra Pradesh. This temple stands atop one of the seven hills of Veṅkaṭācala[2], at an elevation of 853 meters and is constructed in accordance with the South Indian temple architecture style (Āgama Śāstra).

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said to Mahārāja Parīkṣit:

---

1 The word "Tirumalā" is derived from the Telugu language and means "Sacred Mountain." In Āndhra Pradesh, particularly in reference to the Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara temple (Tirupati), the term "Tirumalā" is widely used.

The root word of "Tirumalā" is Tirumala, which originates from the Tamil language. In Tamil, "Tirumala" means "Sacred Mountain" or refers to "Lord Viṣṇu." Tamil Ācāryas and saint-poets often used this name to address Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara (Bālājī).

Considering the Telugu tradition and the common usage in Tirupati, this book consistently uses the term "Tirumalā."

2 This is another name of Tirumalā.

> Just as in Ilāvṛtta-varṣa, Bhārata-varṣa also has many mountains and rivers. Among them are Malaya, Maṅgalaprastha, Maināka, Trikūṭa, Ṛṣabha, Kūṭaka, Kollaka, Sahya, Devagiri, Ṛṣyamūka, Śrīśaila, Veṅkaṭā, Mahendra, Vāridhāra, Vindhya, Śuktimant, Ṛkṣagiri, Pāriyātra, Droṇa, Citrakūṭa, Govardhana, Raivataka, Kakubha, Nīla, Gokāmukha, Indrakīla, Kāmagiri, and many others. Besides these, there are thousands of other mountains, from which numerous rivers originate. (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 5.19.16)

Out of the above-mentioned sacred mountains, it was on Veṅkaṭā Mountain[3] that Lord Nārāyaṇa manifested in the form of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. Due to the manifestation of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in Tirumalā, the Tirumalā region is also called the Vaikuṇṭha of the Kali-yuga. Lord Nārāyaṇa himself manifested in this region. Lord Nārāyaṇa is known by many names such as Veṅkaṭeśvara, Śrīnivāsa, Saptagīriśa, Edukoṇḍalwāḍa, Bālājī, Tirumalappā, and Tirumaleśa. Approximately five thousand years ago, at the beginning of the Kali-yuga, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara manifested in Tirumalā, and one thousand years ago, Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya established Lord Govindarāja in Tirupati.

Kings and queens of many dynasties such as Chola, Vijayanagara, Gadwāl, Mysore, and Pallava received the benefit of serving and having the darśana of these two deities. They contributed to the construction and reconstruction of the temples and towers, donated land and dedicated golden ornaments. Through such

3 This is another name of Tirumalā.

devotional services, they earned great merit and made their lives meaningful. Many Ācāryas and devotees from the Brahma, Kumāra, Rudra, and Śrī traditions have embraced the opportunity to serve Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, dedicating their lives to receiving His darśana and rendering unwavering devotional service to Him.

Various Purāṇas provide different descriptions of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and the various holy places of Tirumalā-Tirupati. Therefore, the information published in this book may differ from the descriptions in books published by other devotees.

1

Pastimes of Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara - 1

From the Bhaviṣyottara Purāṇa

The sages of Naimiṣāraṇya said to Sūta Gosvāmī, "O Sūta Gosvāmī! Until now, we have heard about Lord Varadarāja and Lord Jagannātha. Now, please describe the glory of Veṅkaṭācala." To this, Sūta Gosvāmī replied as follows:

Once, a great yajña was being performed by the sages on the banks of the Gaṅgā River. At that time, Nārada Muni came there and said to the sages, "Offer the results of this yajña to the Supreme Lord," and then he left. The sages sent Bhṛgu Maharṣi to find out who the Supreme Lord is among the three Deities of Lord Brahmā, Lord Viṣṇu, and Lord Maheśa.

First, Bhṛgu Maharṣi went to Lord Brahma and offered him a prostration, but Lord Brahma did not bless him. Therefore, Bhṛgu Maharṣi left there and went towards Kailāśa.

At Kailāśa, Lord Śiva was in seclusion with Pārvatī Devī. When Pārvatī Devī saw the arrival of Bhṛgu Maharṣi, she withdrew in shyness and went away from Lord Śiva. Lord Śiva then said, "When a husband and wife are alone, how can you enter without permission?" and he became angry, ready to destroy him. Bhṛgu

Maharṣi then said, "Without understanding why I am here, you are ready to destroy me. Therefore, I curse you that from now on, you will only be worshipped in the form of a liṅga on earth," and then Bhṛgu Maharṣi proceeded from Kailāśa towards Vaikuṇṭha.

At that time, in Vaikuṇṭha, Lord Viṣṇu was resting on Ādiśeṣa. Bhṛgu Maharṣi thought it was the right time to test Lord Viṣṇu, and he went to Him, strucking His chest with his foot. Lord Viṣṇu immediately got up and said, "O Maharṣi! I apologize for not being aware of your presence," and thus He expressed His apology. Then He seated the sage on a throne and said, "My chest is eight times harder than diamond, so your foot must be in pain." He then washed the sage's feet with lukewarm water and sprinkled it on His own head with devotion.

Later, Bhṛgu Maharṣi returned to the banks of the Gaṅgā and told all the assembled sages how he had tested Lord Brahmā, Lord Viṣṇu, and Lord Maheśa. The sages then concluded that Lord Viṣṇu is the Supreme Lord, and the results of the yajña should be offered to Lord Viṣṇu.

The account of Maharṣi Bhṛgu testing Lord Brahmā, Lord Viṣṇu, and Lord Maheśa is found in both the Padma Purāṇa and the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.

In the Padma Purāṇa, after Maharṣi Bhṛgu conducted his test of the three Deities, the sages concluded that Lord Viṣṇu alone is the Supreme Lord and dedicated the fruits of their yajña (sacrifice) to Lord Viṣṇu.

In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Śukadeva Gosvāmī narrated to Mahārāja Parīkṣit: "Some believe that

Lord Brahmā is the creator of the universe, others consider Lord Śiva, and yet others regard Lord Viṣṇu as the supreme. To resolve this doubt, the sages on the banks of the Sarasvatī River deputed Maharṣi Bhṛgu. After testing the three Deities, Maharṣi Bhṛgu concluded that among Lord Brahmā, Lord Viṣṇu, and Lord Maheśa, Lord Viṣṇu alone is the Supreme Lord."

The Arrival of Lord Nārāyaṇa at Veṅkaṭācala

After Maharṣi Bhṛgu departed, Lakṣmī Devī said to Lord Viṣṇu, "When Bhṛgu struck your chest, which is my abode, with his foot, instead of cursing him, you served him. Because of this, I can no longer stay in Vaikuṇṭha." Saying this, Lakṣmī Devī, overcome with sorrow, left Vaikuṇṭha and began performing penance in Karvīrapura.[4]

In Lakṣmī Devī's absence, Lord Nārāyaṇa did not find Vaikuṇṭha pleasant. Therefore, He too left Vaikuṇṭha, assumed a human form, and descended to the Veṅkaṭācala mountain. There, near the sacred pond of Swami Puṣkariṇī, under a tamarind tree, Lord Nārāyaṇa took residence in an anthill (valmīka). Thus, Lord Nārāyaṇa spent ten thousand years in that anthill.

The Dvāpara Yuga had ended, and the 28th year of Kali Yuga had begun. At that time, Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva approached Lakṣmī Devī. Lord Brahmā said, "Lord Nārāyaṇa is residing in an anthill in search of you. We will assume the forms of a cow and a calf. You should take the form of an ordinary woman and sell us to the

4 Present Kolhāpura.

cola[5] king who rules over Candragiri. I will provide milk to Lord Nārāyaṇa every day."

Lakṣmī Devī agreed to this plan.

Lords Śiva and Lord Brahmā assumed the forms of a cow and a calf. Lakṣmī Devī then took them to the Cola king. She said to the king, "O Rājan! This cow is of an excellent breed, and its milk is not only delicious but also extremely nourishing." Saying this, Lakṣmī Devī sold the cow and calf to the king.

The king informed his queen about the cow and entrusted her with its care. The queen called the royal cowherd and instructed him, "Milk this cow separately every day and bring its milk to me."

The cowherd would take this cow along with other cows to graze on the mountain daily. However, when it was time to milk the cow, there was no milk in its udder.

The queen summoned the cowherd and asked, "Why have you not brought the milk of that special cow until now?"

The cowherd replied, "There is no milk in the cow's udder."

The queen scolded him, saying, "Even though the cow has a calf, why is there no milk in its udder? Surely, you must be secretly drinking the milk yourself! If you fail to bring the cow's milk tomorrow, I will punish you."

When the cowherd took the cows for grazing, he carefully observed the special cow. He noticed that the

5 King of Chola dynasty

cow stood over an anthill (valmīka) and was releasing her milk there, where Śrīnivāsa[6] resided.

Angered by this, the cowherd advanced with his axe to strike the cow. Seeing that the cowherd was about to harm the cow offering milk to Him, Śrīnivāsa tried to stop him. However, the axe missed the cow and struck Śrīnivāsa on His forehead, causing blood to flow.

When the cowherd realized that the divine form before him was none other than Lord Nārāyaṇa Himself in the form of Śrīnivāsa, he was overcome with fear and instantly gave up his life.

After this, the cow ran back to the king, collapsed on the ground, and began bellowing loudly. Seeing the cow's distressed state, the king followed her to the site of the incident. Upon reaching there, he saw the valmīka stained with blood and the cowherd lying dead on the ground.

Astonished, the king asked, "What caused the cowherd's death? Whose blood is this that stains the valmīka? Who is responsible for this dreadful incident?"

At that moment, Śrīnivāsa emerged from the valmīka in His divine form as Lord Nārāyaṇa and narrated the entire incident to the king. The king, deeply moved and filled with humility, pleaded to Śrīnivāsa, "Please forgive the offense committed by my servant."

In response, Śrīnivāsa said, "A master is held responsible for the offenses committed by his servant. Therefore, for this offense committed under your authority, I curse you to become a demon."

6 Name of Lord Nārāyaṇa.

"The king prayed to Śrīnivāsa, saying, "Lord! I have been cursed for an offense I did not commit. Please protect me from this curse." Then Śrīnivāsa said to the king, "O King! After some time, the king of the heavens will be born in this region, and he will arrange the marriage of his daughter, Padmāvatī, to me. On the occasion of that marriage, I will be gifted a golden crown, which I will wear every Friday evening, and when I become joyful with it, your curse will end." In this way, Śrīnivāsa described the future pastimes of His incarnation to the king. The king offered his obeisances to Śrīnivāsa and departed from there. Śrīnivāsa then remembered Bṛhaspati for the treatment of his wound. Immediately, Bṛhaspati appeared there. Śrīnivāsa asked him, "What medicine can be applied to this wound?" Bṛhaspati replied, "Mix the milk of the gular-tree[7] with the cotton fibers of the akauā[8] (āk) tree, make a paste, and apply it to the wound."

Śrīnivāsa's Meeting with Lord Varāha

While Śrīnivāsa was searching for medicine to heal His wound, He encountered Lord Varāha. Recognizing Him instantly as Lord Nārāyaṇa Himself, Lord Varāha asked, "Why have You come here?"

Śrīnivāsa narrated the entire incident and humbly requested Lord Varāha to grant Him permission to reside on this mountain until the end of Kali Yuga.

Lord Varāha said, "If You offer me an appropriate value (Lakṣmī), I will grant You this place to reside."

7 Cluster fig, red river fig, or Ficus racemosa in English

8 The Akaua plant is also known as the Madar plant, and its scientific name is Calotropis gigantea.

Śrīnivāsa replied, "At this moment, Lakṣmī Devī is not with Me. Therefore, I promise You that in Kali Yuga, every devotee who comes to have My darśana will first visit You. Before My abhiṣeka, pūjā, and naivedya, these rituals will be performed for You first. This shall be the price I offer You."

Pleased with this proposal, Lord Varāha agreed and granted Śrīnivāsa one hundred feet of land for His residence.

After this, Lord Varāha instructed Vakulamātā to arrange daily meals for Śrīnivāsa, just as she had been preparing meals for Him (Lord Varāha) earlier.

Sūta Gosvāmī said to the sages, "In Kali Yuga, Lord Nārāyaṇa appeared to uplift the sinful living beings by performing pastimes in the guise of an ordinary human. Although Śrīnivāsa and Lord Varāha are essentially one and the same, He enacted this divine pastime to bewilder those devoid of devotion and to delight those devotees who hear and relish His transcendental pastimes."

The Previous Birth of Vakulamātā

In Dvāpara Yuga, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa delighted Mother Yaśodā by performing His enchanting childhood pastimes, playing with the cowherd boys, and vanquishing demons. However, as time passed, Lord Kṛṣṇa left Vṛndāvana for Mathurā. From Mathurā, He went to Dvārakā and married many queens.

One day, Mother Yaśodā, feeling sorrowful, said to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, "O Kṛṣṇa! I was overjoyed to witness Your childhood pastimes, but I could not witness even one of Your marriages."

Hearing this, Śrī Kṛṣṇa lovingly assured her, "Mother! When you leave this body, you will take birth as Vakula Mātā and serve Lord Varāha on Veṅkaṭācala. I will descend from Vaikuṇṭha as Śrīnivāsa. At that time, it will be you who will arrange My marriage."

Fulfilling this divine promise, Mother Yaśodā was reborn as Vakula Mātā and devoted herself to serving Lord Varāha on Veṅkaṭācala.

Śrīnivāsa's Meeting with Padmāvatī Devī

Śrīnivāsa was peacefully spending His time on Veṅkaṭācala, accepting the service of Vakula Mātā. One day, He decided to go hunting. As soon as He thought of it, Vāyu Deva appeared before Him in the form of a horse and approached Śrīnivāsa.

Adorned in fine clothes and ornaments, Śrīnivāsa took up His bow and arrows and set out for the hunt. He hunted various animals—lions, tigers, foxes, elephants, wild bulls, and wild boars. Afterward, He began chasing an elephant. The elephant, seeing Śrīnivāsa, bowed down in full prostration and pleaded for His mercy. Moved by compassion, Śrīnivāsa decided to spare its life.

Nearby, in a beautiful flower garden, Padmāvatī Devī was gathering flowers with her friends. Śrīnivāsa saw her and approached the group. When He reached them, Padmāvatī's friends asked, "Who are you? Why have you come here?"

Śrīnivāsa replied, "I am addressed as Kṛṣṇa. My brother is Balarāma, my sister is Subhadrā, my father is Vasudeva, and my mother is Devakī. I am dark in

complexion and was born in the dark fortnight, hence I am named Kṛṣṇa."

Then, Śrīnivāsa inquired, "What is your name and lineage?"

Padmāvatī Devī responded, "My name is Padmāvatī. My father is Ākāśarāja. We belong to the lunar dynasty, and our gotra is Atri Muni's. O forest king! Now you may leave from here."

Śrīnivāsa answered, "O princess! Why are you so angry? Those who quench the thirst of travelers and provide food to others attain heaven. Even if you do not provide food, speaking to them with humility brings merit. I have now become deeply attached to you. By fulfilling my wish, you will go to heaven."

Hearing this, Padmāvatī Devī scolded Śrīnivāsa, saying, "O wicked one! Do you not fear for your life? Leave from here before my father arrives, or else your end is certain."

Śrīnivāsa replied, "O princess! Why would the king punish me for acting righteously? You are unmarried, and I am a suitable match for you. Proposing marriage to you is not a fault on my part." Padmāvatī, in anger, retorted, "O fool! My father, Ākāśarāja, will surely punish you!"

Śrīnivāsa, in a calm voice, responded, "For everything born, death is certain. The fruits of one's actions, whether good or bad, are determined by past lives. I have committed no sin, so why would King Ākāśarāja punish me?"

Padmāvatī Devī then said, "O forest king! Why do you wish to die like a crow, abandoning your parents and relatives?"

However, Śrīnivāsa ignored her words, and mounting His horse, began approaching her. Alarmed by this sudden turn of events, Padmāvatī Devī, in fear, began throwing stones at Śrīnivāsa. Her friends, too, joined in and started throwing stones at Him.

Padmāvatī Devī's Birth

A thousand years after the great Mahābhārata war, King Sudharma ruled over the entire land. King Sudharma had two sons, Ākāśarāja and Toṇḍamāna, both of whom were devoted to Lord Narāyaṇa. Ākāśarāja married Princess Dharaṇī, but they had no children for many years. In order to be blessed with a son, Ākāśarāja decided to perform the Putrakāmeṣṭi yajña.

While plowing the land for the yajña, a young girl was found. At that moment, a divine voice proclaimed, "O King! Accept this girl as your daughter. Through her, your fame will spread throughout the world."

The king, overjoyed, named the girl Padmāvatī because she had emerged from a lotus, and he raised her as his daughter. By the grace of this girl, Ākāśarāja was later blessed with a son, whom he named Vasudāsa.

Padmāvatī Devī's Previous Birth

Vakulamātā came to Śrīnivāsa with delicious dishes prepared for him and said, "Govinda! Why are you sleeping during the day? Wake up! Why are you feeling sorrowful? What is the cause of your sorrow? Did you

get scared seeing spirits and ghosts in the forest, or are you afraid of the animals? Why do you have so many wounds on your body? Did you see any girl in the forest? If you did, who is that fortunate girl who has captured your heart? Tell me about her."

Śrīnivāsa then began to describe Padmāvatī Devī, who resembled Lakṣmī Devī, saying, "When I was incarnated as Śrī Rāma in Treta Yuga, I went into exile with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa as per my father's command. During our absence, Rāvaṇa abducted Sītā. As he was taking her away, Agnideva, riding on his sheep, appeared and said to Rāvaṇa, 'O Rāvaṇa! You are not taking Sītā with you. She is a brāhmaṇa woman. Rāma has hidden Sītā with me out of fear. Take her from me and leave the brāhmaṇa woman.' Rāvaṇa accepted Agnideva's words and left Sītā, taking Vedavatī instead, who was residing near Agni."

"After Rāvaṇāsura's killing was completed, and as Vedavatī was about to enter the fire, the real Sītā emerged from the fire. She informed me of the previous events and requested to marry Vedavatī. I replied, 'I had vowed in my Rāma incarnation to marry only one wife, so I cannot marry her now. In Kali Yuga, when Vedavatī will take birth in the home of Ākāśarāja, I will marry her. Until then, Vedavatī will remain in Brahmaloka and continue worshipping Lord Brahmā.' After this, Vedavatī ascended to Brahmaloka.That very Vedavatī later appeared during the Puthrakāmeṣṭi Yajña of Ākāśarāja, while ploughing the sacrificial land. Since she was found in a lotus, Ākāśarāja named the girl Padmāvatī."

In the Varāha Purāṇa, Vedavatī's story is described as follows:

Vedavatī was performing penance for marriage to Lord Nārayāṇa. At that time, Rāvaṇa, the king of Lanka, who had conquered all the directions and ruled over all the kings of the earth, saw Vedavatī performing her penance. Rāvaṇa approached Vedavatī and said, "O auspicious one! There is no match between your penance and beauty. I have conquered fourteen worlds. All the demigods, including Indra, are my servants. All three Deities– Brahma, Lord Viṣṇu and Lord Maheśa are afraid of me. Now, all the three worlds are under my control. I have traveled through all these worlds, but I have not seen a maiden as beautiful as you. Upon seeing you, my mind has become agitated with desire. Stop this penance, so that your youth is not wasted. Accept me as your husband and enrich the kingdom of my Lanka. You will receive the service of the beings from all the fourteen worlds."

Upon hearing Rāvaṇa's words, Vedavatī, filled with anger and fear, gathered her courage and replied, "O king of demons! I have vowed to marry no one but Lord Nārayāṇa. Therefore, I am performing penance to attain Him. If Nārayāṇa does not agree to marry me, I will give up my life, but I will not marry anyone else. So, go on your way."

Rāvaṇa laughed loudly and said, "O foolish woman! Nārayāṇa trembles upon hearing my name. I am offering you marriage, and you refuse? I will forcibly marry you, and we shall see who stops me!" Saying this, Rāvaṇa approached her and grabbed her hair. Vedavatī, invoking her penance

power, transformed her hand into a sword and cut off her hair. She then said to Rāvaṇa, "O sinful one! Why do you wish to forcefully take a woman who has no interest in marrying you? Because of me, you and your lineage will be destroyed." Saying this, Vedavatī entered the fire. This very Vedavatī was the one Agnideva later gave to Rāvaṇa.

Vakulamātā's Meeting with Padmāvatī Devi's Friends

Śrīnivāsa said to Vakulamātā, "I wish to marry Padmāvatī. Therefore, please go to her parents and arrange our marriage." Vakulamātā replied to Śrīnivāsa, "Lord, as you have said, I will arrange your marriage accordingly." Saying this, she mounted a mare and set out on the path Śrīnivāsa had described. Vakulamātā first bathed in Kapila tīrtha and had darśana of Kapileśvara. There, she prayed for her son's marriage. From there, Vakulamātā bathed in Padma Sarovaram and then visited the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma temple[9] located there, offering lotus flowers to Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma. Afterward, Vakulamātā went to the Suvarnamukhārī River, where she bathed and purified herself. Vakulamātā, after leaving the Suvarnamukhārī River, reached Agastya-Āśrama and had the darśana of Agastyeśwara. At that time, Padmāvatī Devi's friends also arrived there. Vakulamātā went to them and asked, "Who are you? Why have you come here?" The young girls replied, "We are friends of Padmāvatī Devi," and then they narrated the events from the flower garden. They continued, "When the hunter (Kīrātaka) left,

9 This temple of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma was the same one that still exists within the temple of Padmāvatī Devī.

Padmāvatī Devi fainted and fell to the ground. We carried Padmāvatī Devi in a palanquin and took her to Akāśarāja, and explained everything. Then Akāśarāja instructed his son Vasudāsa to bring Bṛhaspati here.' Vasudāsa went to heaven and brought Bṛhaspati. Akāśarāja served Bṛhaspati as a guest and asked him for the remedy for Padmāvatī's recovery. Bṛhaspati suggested that you perform the Abhiṣeka service for Agastyeśwara. Following this guidance, Akāśarāja directed the brāhmaṇas to perform the Abhiṣeka service for Agastyeśwara and make the necessary arrangements. Therefore, we have come here with the required materials for the Abhiṣeka puja."

After this, Padmāvatī Devi's friends asked Vakulamātā, "Who are you? Where have you come from? What is the reason for your visit?" Vakulamātā replied, "You are unaware of the influence of the eternal, birthless Lord Narāyaṇa. That same Lord Narāyaṇa is now residing in the form of an ordinary human on the Veṅkaṭācala Mountain, I am His servant. My name is Vakula. I have come to meet Padmāvatī Devi's mother, Dharaṇī Devi. Please guide me on how to meet her." Padmāvatī Devi's friends responded, "You can come with us and meet Dharaṇī Devi." Vakulamātā agreed and began walking with them.

Śrīnivāsa accepted form of a female ozā[10]

Śrīnivāsa, after Vakulamātā departed to present the marriage proposal to Akāśarāja, began to contemplate, "Having only one son is as good as being childless, and a person with only one eye is as good as being blind.

10 A woman who practices sorcery, exorcism, or palmistry.

Similarly, the work done by a single woman often doesn't succeed. It is possible that Akāśarāja may not trust what Vakulamātā has said." With this thought, he transformed Lord Brahmā into the form of a child and Lord Śiva into a Magic stick. Later, Śrīnivāsa himself assumed the guise of a female exorcist. Disguised as a female exorcist, Śrīnivāsa arrived in the kingdom of Nārāyaṇapura, the realm of Akāśarāja, accompanied by Lord Brahmā, appearing as a child, and Lord Śiva, manifesting as a mystical staff.

In a voice loud enough for the people of Nārāyaṇapura to hear, the woman began to say, "I can tell you about anyone's past, present, and future." Hearing this, a woman from the town went to Dharaṇī Devī and told her about the female exorcist. Dharaṇī Devī called her and asked her to inquire about Padmāvatī Devī. Upon looking at Padmāvatī Devī's hand, the female exorcist said to Dharaṇī Devī, "Your daughter saw a young man in the flower garden some days ago and fell in love with him. She wants to marry him, but fearing that you may not approve, she has not informed you. As a result, she is grieving, losing sleep and appetite. If you do not arrange her marriage with that young man immediately, your daughter will not survive. He is no ordinary person; he is Lord Nārāyaṇa from Vaikuṇṭha. If you arrange her marriage to Lord Nārāyaṇa, her mental anguish will be relieved." After saying this, the female ozā left. Once she departed, Dharaṇī Devī went to Padmāvatī and comforted her, saying, "I will act according to your wishes. Do not grieve."

Padmāvatī Devī's friends went to Dharaṇī Devī and informed her about the arrival of Vakulamātā. Dharaṇī

Devī respectfully welcomed Vakulamātā and asked, "Who are you, and from where have you come?" Vakulamātā replied, "I serve Lord Varāha and Lord Nārāyaṇa on the Veṅkaṭācala mountain." She also narrated the incident that took place in the flower garden and said, "Lord Nārāyaṇa wishes to marry your daughter. He has sent me to inquire about your consent." Dharaṇī Devī told Vakulamātā, "I will consult my husband and give you a response."

Afterward, Dharaṇī Devī went to Ākāśarāja and discussed everything Vakulamātā and the female ozā had said. Ākāśarāja called for Bṛhaspati and discussed the matters with him, seeking information about Śrīnivāsa. Bṛhaspati replied, "Śukadeva[11] knows more about Śrīnivāsa than I do. Therefore, you should ask Śukadeva." Ākāśarāja summoned Toṇḍamān to invite Śukadeva. Toṇḍamān went and presented Ākāśarāja's invitation to Śukadeva. Śukadeva accompanied Toṇḍamān, and Ākāśarāja stepped forward to welcome him, leading him to the guest hall and seating him with great respect.

After welcome ceremony finish They discussed the matters Vakulamātā and the female ozā had conveyed, and Ākāśarāja asked for more information about Śrīnivāsa. Śukadeva then explained the events in Vaikuṇṭha and the reason for Lord Nārāyaṇa's arrival at Veṅkaṭācala. He further told Ākāśarāja, "You are extremely fortunate. As a result of your past life's virtuous deeds, Lord Nārāyaṇa himself is going to become your son-in-law. O King! Due to your friendship, we too are partaking in this great fortune."

11 Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the son of Maharṣi Vyāsadeva

Ākāśarāja Writes a Wedding Proposal Letter to Śrīnivāsa for Padmāvatī

Ākāśarāja consulted with Bṛhaspati and asked how to write a marriage letter to Śrīnivāsa. Bṛhaspati suggested: "I, Ākāśarāja, who rule Nārāyaṇapura by your grace, and who possess the enthusiasm to serve the feet of Lord Nārāyaṇa, who is divine, auspicious, endowed with all good qualities, eternal, independent, and who assumes many incarnations, have decided to marry my daughter, Padmāvatī, to you. Therefore, please come along with your relatives on the auspicious occasion of Vaishākha Shukla Dashamī, Friday, and marry Padmāvatī."

Following Bṛhaspati's instructions, Ākāśarāja wrote the letter and handed it over to Śukadeva, requesting, "Please take this auspicious letter along with Vakulamātā and your disciples to Veṅkaṭācala and deliver it to Śrīnivāsa." Śukadeva agreed and went to Veṅkaṭācala, where he explained all the events to Śrīnivāsa and gave him the auspicious message from Ākāśarāja. Śrīnivāsa, upon reading the letter, was greatly pleased. Embracing Śukadeva, he said, "Just as Hanumān brought me the news of Sītā and I embraced him and bestowed upon him Brahmapada, in the same way, I bless you as well."

Śrīnivāsa Writes a Reply Letter to Ākāśarāja

Śrīnivāsa then said to Śukadeva, "I will write a letter to Ākāśarāja, the friend of Indra, just as I had written earlier to Rukmiṇī." He wrote in the letter:

"To Ākāśarāja, the son of Sudharma, who is worshiped by kings, I, Śrīnivāsa, offer my devout salutations and

write this letter. I am greatly pleased to have read the auspicious letter you sent. On the auspicious day of Vaishākha Shukla Dashamī, Friday, as you have chosen, I will surely come and marry Padmāvatī. Just as the ocean gained glory by offering his daughter (Lakṣmī) to me, you too will gain fame in this world by offering your daughter Padmāvatī to me. Just as Bhagiratha brought the Ganga to the earth and redeemed the cursed sons of Sagar by the curse of Kapila Muni, similarly, by offering your beautiful daughter to me, you will redeem your ancestors and attain incomparable glory."

Śrīnivāsa handed over this letter to Śukadeva and sent him to deliver it to Ākāśarāja.

Śrīnivāsa Invites the Demigods to His Wedding

Śrīnivāsa said to Vakulamātā, "Ākāśarāja is with his relatives. People prefer to be part of a wedding or dispute with those of equal status. I am alone here, far from my relatives. Therefore, we should also call our relatives for the wedding."

After this, Śrīnivāsa meditated upon Garuḍa and Ādiśeṣa, and they immediately appeared. Śrīnivāsa told Garuḍa, "You go at once to Lord Brahma and give him the auspicious invitation for my wedding. Ask him to grace my wedding along with his relatives." To Ādiśeṣa, he said, "You go to Kailāśa and invite Lord Śiva along with his relatives to grace my wedding."

Garuḍa and Ādiśeṣa obeyed his orders and delivered the invitations.

Lord Brahmā announced in his realm that everyone should attend the wedding of Lord Nārāyana. He

summoned the Dikpālas such as Indra, Kubera, Varuṇa, and Yamarāja and ordered them to come along with their relatives to the wedding. Lord Brahmā, accompanied by his wives (Sarasvatī, Sāvitri, and Gayatrī) and the Dikpālas, arrived at Śeṣācal and offered his respects at the feet of Śrīnivāsa.

At the wish of Lord Brahmā, Viśvakarmā made arrangements for accommodation for all the guests. After this, Śrīnivāsa instructed Viśvakarmā to go to Nārayāṇapura and construct the wedding pavilion.

Lakṣmī Devī Attends the Wedding of Śrīnivāsa

Śrīnivāsa thought to himself that Lakṣmī Devī should also witness his wedding. He called upon Sūrya Dev and said, "Go to Lakṣmī Devī, who is meditating in Karavīrapur (Kolhāpur), and tell her that I have become weak and fallen to the ground due to hunger on Śeṣācal Mountain. Hearing this, she will immediately come here."

Sūrya Dev replied, "Lord, Lakṣmī Devī knows the thoughts of everyone. If I tell her that you have fallen to the ground due to hunger, how will she believe me?"

Śrīnivāsa responded, "By the influence of my māyā, she will believe your words and come here."

Sūrya Dev agreed, saying, "Lord, I will do as you say." Sūrya Dev went to Lakṣmī Devī and told her, "Nārāyana has fallen to the ground due to weakness from hunger." Upon hearing this, Lakṣmī Devī believed his words and immediately arrived at Veṅkaṭācala.

Seeing her, all the Ṛṣis, Munis, and Devas offered their respects. Lakṣmī Devī bowed to Śrīnivāsa and

embraced him. Śrīnivāsa said to Lakṣmī Devī, "During the Rāmāvatāra, you asked me to marry Vedavatī. That same Vedavatī is now born as Padmāvatī. I wish to marry Padmāvatī in your presence." Lakṣmī Devī happily agreed.

Śrīnivāsa borrows a loan from Kubera

Śrīnivāsa said to Lord Brahmā, "Please make arrangements for food for all the guests who have arrived." Lord Brahmā replied, "Lord, there is no necessary material or vessels available here to prepare the food." Śrīnivāsa said, "I am in the form of an ordinary human at the moment, so I cannot use the wealth from Vaikuṇṭha in the earthly realm."

Lord Brahmā suggested, "Lord, when there is a shortage of money for a wedding or house construction, ordinary people take loans. Similarly, you should take a loan from Kubera."

Śrīnivāsa accepted his suggestion and called upon Kubera, asking for a loan to cover the expenses of the wedding. Kubera said, "This is the earthly realm, so you will need to provide me with a written document before I can give you the money."

Śrīnivāsa agreed and wrote, "Borrower: Śrīnivāsa, Lender: Kubera. On the seventh day of the bright fortnight of the month of Vaiśākha in the year of Kāliyuga named Vilamba, I, Śrīnivāsa, am borrowing 14 lakh gold coins (māḍala) for the purpose of my wedding. I promise to repay this loan with interest within 1,000 years. The witnesses to this loan are Lord Brahmā, Rudra, and a Peepal tree."

Śrīnivāsa gave this written document to Kubera, who provided the money. Lord Brahmā used the money to acquire the necessary materials and prepare the food. Then Lord Brahmā asked Śrīnivāsa, "Lord, to whom should this naivedya[12] be presented?" Śrīnivāsa replied, "Offer the naivedya to Ahobil Lord Narasiṁha Deva."

Lord Brahmā worshipped Lord Narasiṁha Deva and presented the naivedya. The prasāda was then distributed to all the gathered guests.

Śrīnivāsa Arrives at Nārāyaṇapura

Śrīnivāsa underwent a ceremonial auspicious bath, adorned with fragrant substances. He was dressed in beautiful clothes and ornaments, and was decorated as the groom. Apsaras danced, Gandharvas sang, the demigods showered flowers, and the ṛṣis and munis recited the Vedās. Afterward, Śrīnivāsa went to Lord Varāha and said, "Lord, with your blessings, I am about to marry. Please attend my wedding along with Bhudevī."

Lord Varāha replied, "My servant, Vakula, will attend your wedding." Śrīnivāsa responded, "I cannot refuse your wish." After this, he, along with Lakṣmī Devī, mounted Garuḍa and set out for Nārayāṇapura. On the way, they reached the banks of Padma Sarovara.

At Padma Sarovara, there was Śukadeva's āsrama. Śukadeva approached Śrīnivāsa, bowed down, and prayed, "O Lord of Vaikuṇṭha! Please come to my āsrama, accept my hospitality, and make my life

12 Food offering

meaningful." Śrīnivāsa replied, "I am not alone. My family and followers are with me." Śukadeva answered, "Lord, if you are satisfied, then all the residents of the fourteen worlds will also be satisfied. Please accept my hospitality."

Śrīnivāsa accepted his prayer and visited Śukadeva's āsrama. Śukadeva bathed in Padma Sarovara, prepared delicious food, and offered it to Lakṣmī Devī and Śrīnivāsa. After consuming the offerings, Lakṣmī Devī and Śrīnivāsa continued their journey toward Nārayāṇapura.

The Wedding of Padmāvatī Devī and Śrīnivāsa

As soon as Lakṣmī Devī and Śrīnivāsa arrived at Nārayāṇapura, Toṇḍamān, along with his wife and a group of brāhmaṇas, went to welcome them. He bowed to Śrīnivāsa and offered his congratulations. Toṇḍamān's wife performed an āratī for Śrīnivāsa to protect him from the evil eye. Toṇḍamān then took Śrīnivāsa to the palace of Ākāśarāja and seated him on a golden throne. Ākāśarāja bowed at Śrīnivāsa' feet. Dharaṇī Devī bathed Śrīnivāsa' feet with water from the Swami Puṣkariṇī, and Ākāśarāja personally washed his feet and sprinkled the water on his head. He also sprinkled this holy water on his family, servants, treasury, cowshed, elephant stables, horse stables, and clothing store, saying, "With the footwater of Śrīnivāsa, my kingdom, family, ancestors, and all my possessions are now purified."

After this, Bṛhaspati addressed Śrīnivāsa, saying, "Accept Padmāvatī, the daughter of Ākāśarāja, who is born into the family of Atri Mahāṛṣi and Sudhīra's

descendants, as your wife." sage Vasīṣṭha responded on Śrīnivāsa' behalf, saying, "Śrīnivāsa, born in the Vasiṣṭha lineage, the great-grandson of Yayāti, the grandson of the mighty Sūrasena, and the son of Vasudeva, will accept Padmāvatī as his wife."

Ākāśarāja then prayed to Śrīnivāsa, saying, "O Purushottama! I offer my daughter to you. Please accept her." He handed Padmāvatī over to Śrīnivāsa' right hand. During the wedding, sage Vasīṣṭha recited Vedic mantras, and amidst the sacred chanting, Śrīnivāsa tied the mangalsūtra around Padmāvatī's neck. During this ritual, the brāhmaṇa women blessed Padmāvatī, saying, "O Devi, like Sāvitrī, may you give birth to many children and become the mother of all the worlds, bringing welfare to all."

The place where the wedding of Padmāvati Devī and Śrīnivāsa took place is now home to the temple of Padmāvati Devī and Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, located 40 kilometers from Tirupati.

To mark the wedding, Ākāśarāja donated millions of cows, horses, clothes, jewelry, and wealth to the brāhmaṇas. He also gifted Śrīnivāsa a dowry consisting of a golden crown weighing a hundred bharas,[13] a necklace, gem-studded ornaments, snake-shaped armlets, rings, a golden waistband, and a gem-encrusted necklace.

After the wedding, everyone joined Śrīnivāsa and Padmāvati in a grand feast that lasted for four days. On the fifth day, Śrīnivāsa, accompanied by Padmāvati

13 *Bhāra* refers to a unit of measurement of weight (1 bhāra equals 96 kg).

Devī, rode on Garuḍa and traveled to the āśrama of sage Agastya, situated on the banks of the Suvarṇamukhārī River.

Ākāśarāja, who was sorrowful due to his separation from Padmāvati Devī, sent hundreds of maidservants, along with food supplies and servants, to serve them at sage Agastya's āśrama. He also personally met Śrīnivāsa and Padmāvati. Śrīnivāsa said to Ākāśarāja, "You are like a guru to me. If you have any desire, tell me, and I will fulfill it."

Ākāśarāja humbly requested, "O Kṛṣṇa, please bless me and my family with devotion." Śrīnivāsa granted him the blessing. Then, Śrīnivāsa gifted his silk robes to his servant Vasudāsa who is now his brother-in-law. Ākāśarāja said to Padmāvati Devī, "Daughter, I am leaving now. Serve Śrīnivāsa and make your life meaningful."

Afterward, Ākāśarāja returned to Nārayāṇapura. Śrīnivāsa addressed the demigods and sages, saying, "I will stay at sage Agastya's āśrama for the next six months. You may all return to your respective abodes."

Unable to refuse his request, all the demigods and sages circumambulated Śrīnivāsa, Padmāvati Devī, and Lakṣmī Devī, offering their respects, and departed. With Śrīnivāsa' permission, Lakṣmī Devī returned to Karvīrpur (Kolhāpur).

Ākāśarāja's Departure from material world

When Śrīnivāsa was at sage Agastya's āśrama, Ākāśarāja's health began to deteriorate. As he was about

to leave his body, he expressed a desire to see Padmāvati Devī and Śrīnivāsa, and sent a messenger to bring them. The messenger bowed to Padmāvati Devī and informed her, "Ākāśarāja is critically ill and wishes to meet you." Upon hearing this, Padmāvati Devī fainted and collapsed. Sage Agastya's wife revived her by serving her. Hearing the news of Ākāśarāja's health, Śrīnivāsa became deeply saddened.

Everyone arrived in Nārayāṇapura and met Ākāśarāja. Śrīnivāsa, with deep emotion, said, "O King! Are you leaving your son Vasudāsa, daughter Padmāvati, your patient brother Toṇḍamāna, the ruling kings, your kingdom, and your body? You are our father. Without you, we will be orphans. Now, we will no longer have the good fortune of seeing you in person." Ākāśarāja replied, "O Śrīnivāsa, although you are the relatives of all the worlds, by fortunate circumstances, you have established a direct relationship with us. By becoming our relatives, the births of all of us have been successful. After I reach Brahmaloka, I leave the responsibility of protecting my son Vasudāsa and brother Toṇḍamāna to you." Saying this, Ākāśarāja gave up his life and ascended to Brahmaloka in the plane that had arrived for him. Vasudāsa performed the final rites of Ākāśarāja under the guidance of sages such as Vasiṣṭha, Agastya, Atri, and Bhāradvāja. After this, Śrīnivāsa and Padmāvati Devī returned to sage Agastya's āśrama.

Toṇḍamāna and Vasudāsa's War for the Kingdom

After Ākāśarāja's departure, Toṇḍamāna said to Vasudāsa, "When the elders are no longer present, the

younger one receives the kingdom. Therefore, the right to rule this kingdom belongs to me." Vasudāsa replied, "A father's kingdom belongs to the son. Hence, I have the right to this kingdom." Thus, both prepared for war, disputing over the kingdom. To help in the war, both Vasudāsa and Toṇḍamāna sought Śrīnivāsa's assistance. Śrīnivāsa, in private, asked Padmāvati Devī, "Whom should I help?" Padmāvati Devī replied, "Toṇḍamāna is brave and experienced in battle. Vasudāsa is neither experienced in war nor does he have a father, so you should help Vasudāsa." Śrīnivāsa gave Toṇḍamāna his conch and discus and promised to assist Vasudāsa in the war.

The battle began. Vasudāsa struck Toṇḍamāna with ten arrows, injuring him. In anger, Toṇḍamāna decided to leave Vasudāsa and fight Śrīnivāsa. Śrīnivāsa injured Toṇḍamāna, killed his charioteer, and destroyed his chariot. Seeing this, Toṇḍamāna's son attacked Śrīnivāsa and struck his chest with five thousand arrows. In his fury, Toṇḍamāna mounted his horse and, using the Sudarśana Cakra given by Śrīnivāsa, struck Śrīnivāsa's chest, causing him to faint and fall to the battlefield like an ordinary human.

As soon as Śrīnivāsa fell on the battlefield, Padmāvatī Devī, who was watching this scene from the inner quarters, went to sage Agastya in distress and began praying in front of everyone, "Has my husband fallen unconscious on the battlefield, or is he doing this only as a test for me? Please guide me as to what I should do now." Sage Agastya said to Padmāvatī Devī, "A person gains fruit by acting according to the time and place.

Therefore, if you wish for your husband's well-being, try to bring him back from the battlefield. The dharma of women is to have immense devotion toward their husbands. Kalyāṇī! I believe the best course of action is to try for peace. Your uncle and brother are both capable of ruling the kingdom, and there is no doubt about that." Padmāvatī Devī accepted the words of sage Agastya and said, "I will do as you say." After that, she set off with sage Agastya towards the battlefield.

Upon reaching the battlefield with sage Agastya, Padmāvatī Devī served Śrīnivāsa and brought him out of his unconscious state. Śrīnivāsa, upon seeing Padmāvatī Devī, said, "Women should not come to the battlefield. Why have you come here?" Sage Agastya then said to Śrīnivāsa, "O Śrīnivāsa! Stop the war and divide the kingdom between the two." But Śrīnivāsa, in anger, replied, "I will defeat Toṇḍamāna and his son in battle and give the kingdom to Vasudāsa. You should leave now." Padmāvatī Devī bowed to Śrīnivāsa and, with folded hands, prayed, "O Lord! Pundarīkākṣa! What will be the benefit of this destructive war? Both Vasudāsa and Toṇḍamāna are our kin, so please divide the kingdom between them."

Śrīnivāsa replied, "You do not understand the duty of a Kṣatriya. You should leave from here!" When Śrīnivāsa refused, Padmāvatī Devī prayed to sage Agastya, "Please, you stop the war."

Sage Agastya explained to Śrīnivāsa, "At the end of his life, Ākāśarāja made you promise to protect both Vasudāsa and Toṇḍamāna. If you kill one and give the kingdom to the other, you will break the promise you

made. Therefore, divide the kingdom equally between the two." After hearing sage Agastya counsel, Śrīnivāsa became calm and called Vasudāsa and Toṇḍamāna, saying, "At the time of Ākāśarāja's departure from his body, he entrusted me with the responsibility of protecting both of you. Therefore, you both should divide the kingdom equally." Vasudāsa and Toṇḍamāna could not refuse Śrīnivāsa's words and divided the kingdom equally.

Śrīnivāsa Assumes the Form of Deity

After dividing the kingdom between Vasudāsa and Toṇḍamāna, Śrīnivāsa started living in sage Agastya āsrama. One day, Toṇḍamāna came to Śrīnivāsa and bowed before him. Śrīnivāsa embraced Toṇḍamāna and asked, "Why have you come?"

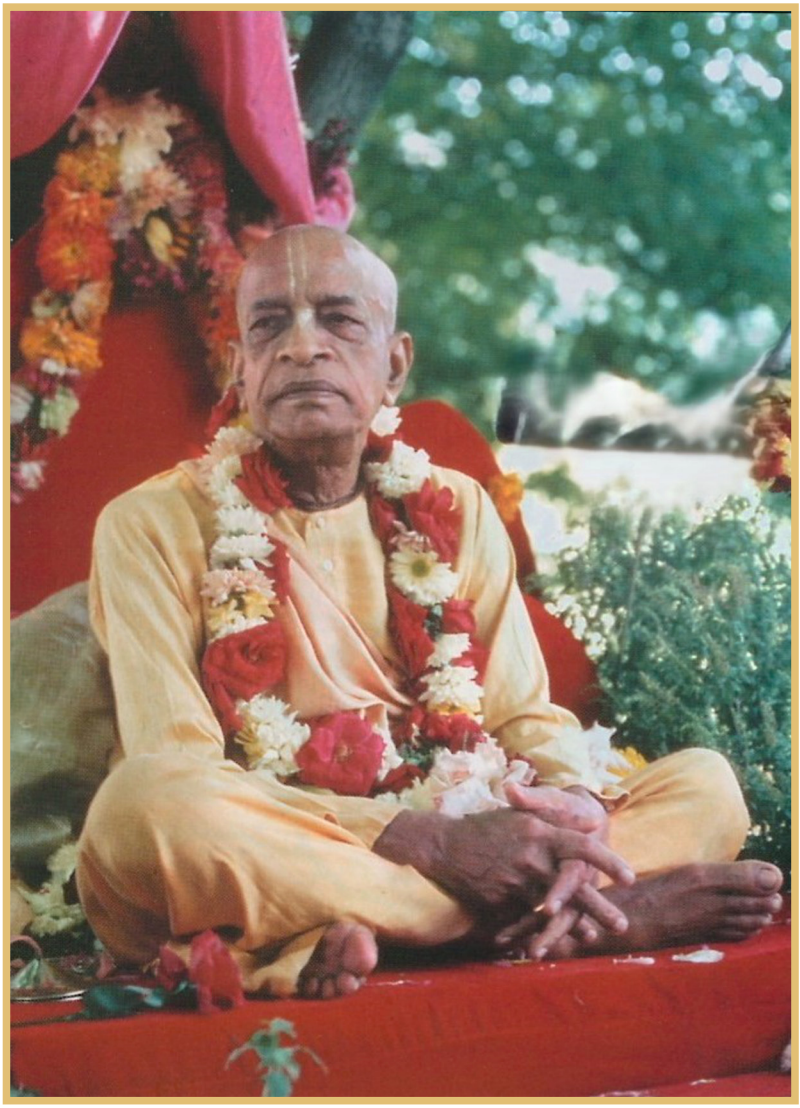
Toṇḍamāna replied, "Master! There is nothing more important to me than having your darśana (sacred sight). O Śrīnivāsa, you are the Lord of Yogis, the Creator of the Universe, the one who appoints Lord Brahmā, and the consort of Goddess Lakṣmī."

Praising Śrīnivāsa, he continued, "By serving you, I want to make my life meaningful."

Śrīnivāsa said, "O King, it is because of your brother that I have become a householder. Still, I have no house to live in. It would be a disgrace for the son-in-law of Ākāśarāja to not have a house and to live in others' homes. Therefore, please construct an extraordinary temple for me on this Veṅkaṭācala mountain, with three courtyards, two towers, seven gates, a place for weaving garlands of flowers, a kitchen, a yajña hall, a storeroom

for clothes, an oil room, a dining hall, and a room for jewelry."

Toṇḍamāna had the temple constructed as Śrīnivāsa instructed, including the steps for the temple (from Śrīnivāsa Maṅgāpuram). Once the construction was completed, he informed Śrīnivāsa. At an auspicious moment, Śrīnivāsa entered the temple with the demigods. He placed Padmāvatī Devī on his chest, placed his left hand on his waist, and with his right hand, signaled to rest his feet, thus forming the form of the deity in the temple.

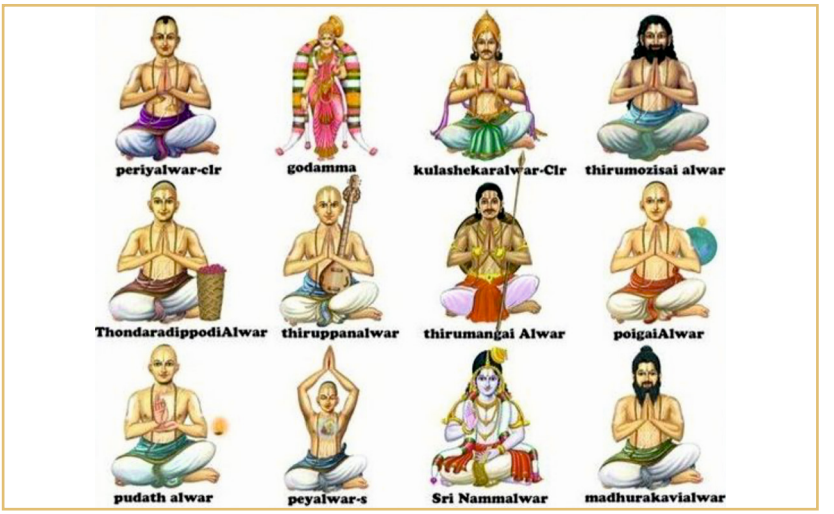


His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Conscioness

(page 219)



12 Āḻvār (Page 139)

Śrī Anantācārya
(Page 171)

Śrī Rāmānujācārya
(Page 163)

Śrī Annamācārya
(Page 186)

It was with this very crowbar that Anantācārya struck Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. Today, we can see this crowbar at the first gopuram of the Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara temple.
(Pages 44, 173)

Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu (Page 204)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu (Page 201)

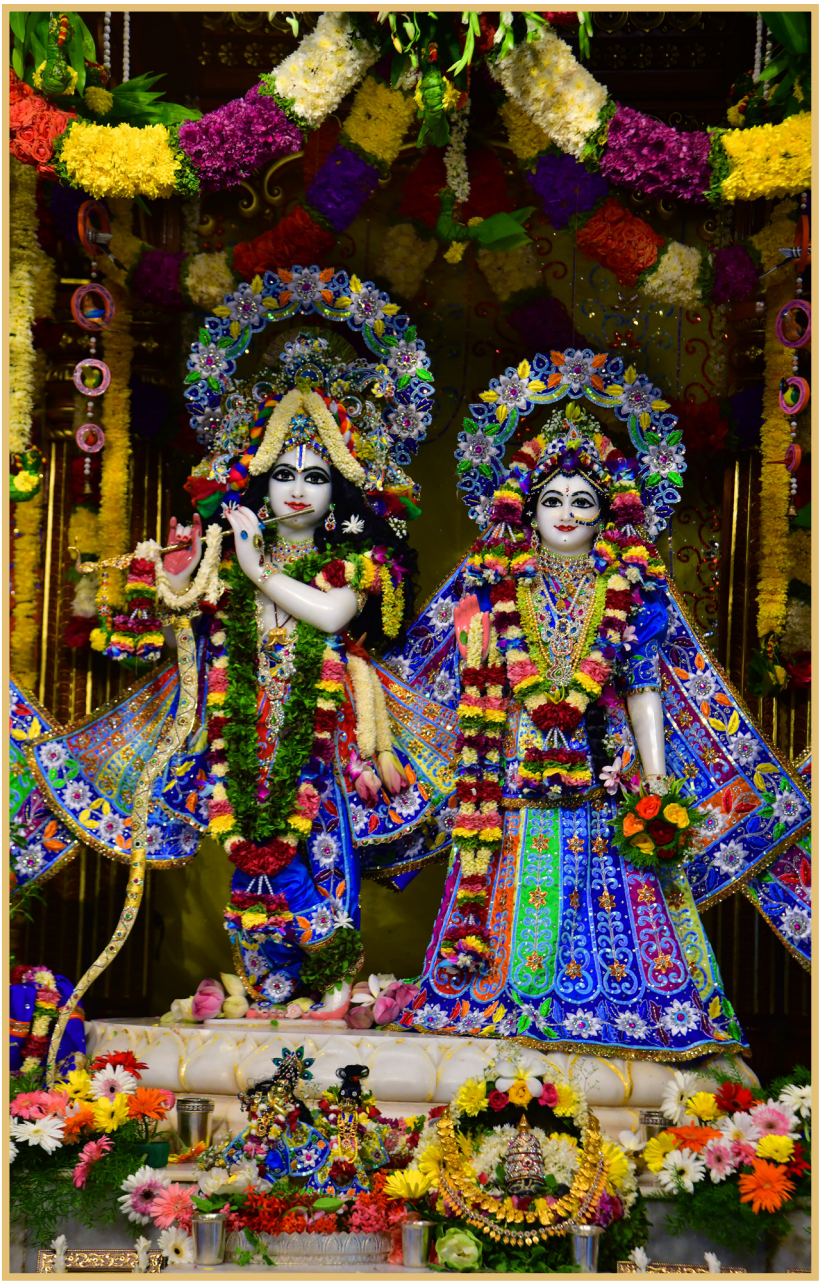
Suvarṇa-mukhārī River (Page 136)

Śrī Vyāsatīrtha (Page 200)

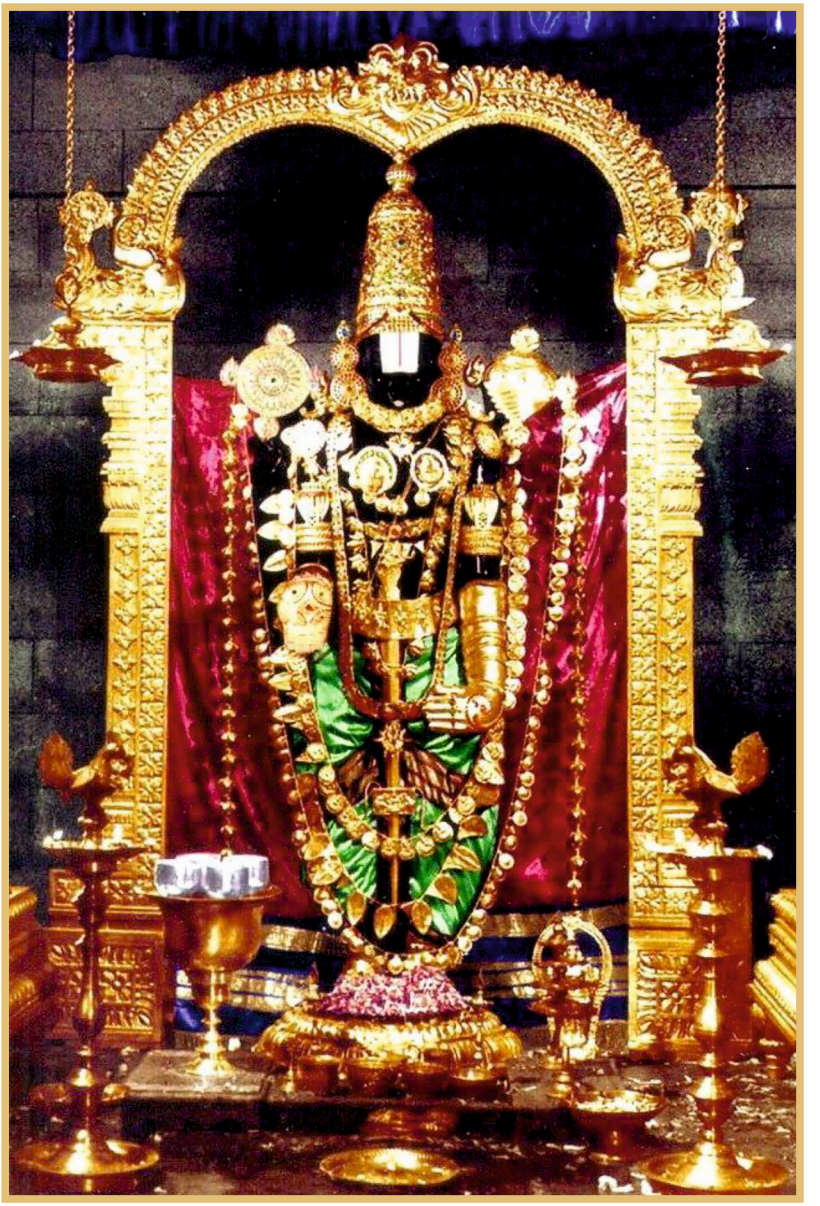
Śrī Kanakadāsa (Page 211)

Lord Govindarāja
(Page 115)

Swami Puṣkariṇī
(Page 89)



Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda at ISKCON Tirupati
(Page 121)



The original Deity of Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara at Tirumala
(Page 97)

Padmāvatī Devī at Tirucānūr

(Page 132)

Lord Varāha (Page 94)

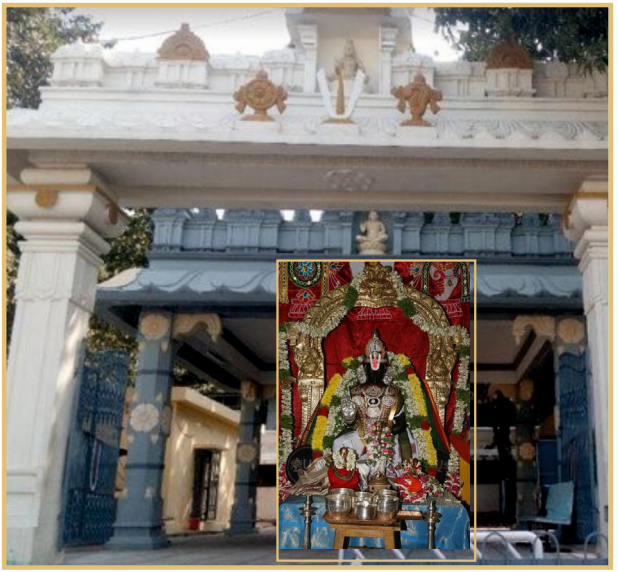
Lord Varāha Temple (Page 94)

Śrī Vāri Pādalu at Alipiri
The Footprints of
Lord Balaji (Page 131)

Śrī Sītā-Rāma-Lakṣmaṇa
Festival Deities at Tirumalā
(Pages 67-68)

Tumburu (Gona) Tīrtha
(Page 112)

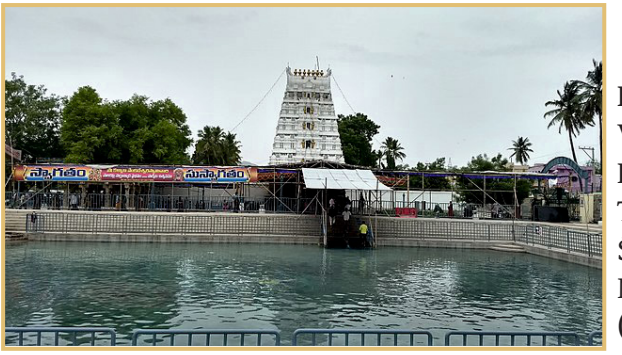
Pāpanāśana Tīrtha
(Page 105)



(Left)Tirumala Nambi Temple (House) (Pages 100, 160)
(Right) Śrī Vedānta Deśika is considered
an incarnation of the bell used in the worship of
Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara. (page 180)

Kapila Āśrama at Kapila Tīrtha
(Page 120)

Lord Koḍanda Rāma Temple with Śrī Sītā-Rāma-Lakṣmaṇa (installed deities and festival deities) in Tirupati
(Page 118)



Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara Kalyāṇa Temple at Śrīnivāsa Maṅgāpura
(Page 135)

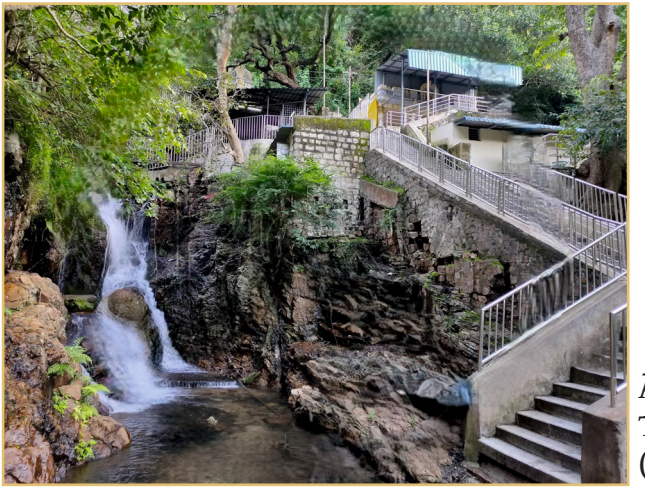
Lord Śrī Malayappa along with Śrīdevī and Bhūdevī
(Pages 44, 70-72)

Anantācārya Brindavan (Samādhi) (Page 100)

(Upper left) Hathīrām Bābājī Brindavan (Samādhi) (Page 102)

Pāṇḍava Tīrtha (Page 113)

(Upper) Vengamāmbā Brindavan (Samādhi) (Page 101)



Ākāśagaṅgā Tīrtha (Page 103)

2

Pastimes of Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara - 2

From the Skanda Purāṇa

This story is presented in brief, based on the first to the tenth chapters of the Śrī Veṅkaṭācala Māhātmya in the second Vaiṣṇava section of the Skanda Purāṇa.

What Lord Śiva told to Skanda is the Skanda Purāṇa. This was narrated by Sūta Gosvāmī to the Ṛṣis at Naimiṣāraṇya.

Now, let us learn about the divine pastimes of Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara from the Skanda Purāṇa. The pastimes of Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara in the Skanda Purāṇa differ in some aspects from those in the Bhaviṣyottara Purāṇa. The Ācāryas have stated that, in each Kalpa[14], Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara descends from Vaikuṇṭha in various forms and performs different pastimes. Therefore, sometimes, the Lord's independent will may manifest differences in these pastimes, which is called Kalpabheda (difference according to different cycles).

Lord Nārāyaṇa's Arrival at Veṅkaṭācala

Sūta Gosvāmī narrated to the Ṛṣis: There was a king named Śaṅkha in the Haihaya dynasty. King Śaṅkha

14 One day of Lord Brahmā, during which a thousand caturyuga (Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara, and Kali Yuga) occur

performed many yajñas (sacrificial rituals) for Lord Nārāyaṇa. He also donated gold, cows, and land to brāhmaṇas. However, despite all these efforts, he was unable to have the darśana (divine vision) of Lord Nārāyaṇa, which made him very distressed.

At that time, Lord Nārāyaṇa revealed through an ākāśavāṇī (divine voice), "O king! Go to Vṛṣabhācala.[15] Vṛṣabhācala is like Vaikuṇṭha (the supreme abode). Go to the sacred lake Swami Puṣkariṇī, located there, and perform austerities for Me. I will grant you darśana there."

Lord Nārāyaṇa also said, "Once, the great sage Agastya asked Lord Brahmā where he could have the darśana of Lord Nārāyaṇa. Lord Brahmā told him to perform tapasyā at Veṅkaṭācala. Therefore, Agastya Muni is meditating at Veṅkaṭācala. I will grant both you and Agastya Muni darśana at Veṅkaṭācala."

King Śaṅkha was overjoyed, and after handing over his kingdom to his son Vajra, he proceeded to Veṅkaṭācala. He bathed in Swami Puṣkariṇī and began performing tapasyā for Lord Nārāyaṇa.

Once, along with Indra and other demigods, Bṛhaspati asked Lord Brahmā, "Where can we find the darśana of Lord Nārāyaṇa?"

Lord Brahmā replied, "At Veṅkaṭācala, both Agastya Muni and King Śaṅkha are performing austerities for Lord Nārāyaṇa. You should go to Agastya Muni. There, you will have the darśana of Lord Nārāyaṇa."

---

15 Another name of Veṅkaṭācala

The demigods then traveled to Veṅkaṭācala, where they met Agastya Muni and explained the details shared by Lord Brahmā. Agastya Muni, along with the demigods, met King Śaṅkha. King Śaṅkha, after respectfully greeting the sages and demigods, honored them with hospitality.

King Śaṅkha, Agastya Muni, and the demigods together prayed to Lord Nārāyaṇa. Pleased by their prayers, Lord Nārāyaṇa appeared, riding on Garuḍa. All of them bowed to Lord Nārāyaṇa and offered hymns in praise. Lord Nārāyaṇa then addressed Agastya Muni, saying, "What boon do you wish for?"

Agastya Muni replied, "May I always have your devotion, and may You reside here on this mountain, granting darśana to all beings."

Lord Nārāyaṇa responded, "As you wish, I will remain here."

Lord Nārāyaṇa then turned to King Śaṅkha and said, "I am pleased with your devotion and austerity. Ask for a boon."

King Śaṅkha requested, "May I always have Your devotion."

Lord Nārāyaṇa assured him, "Your wish will be granted," and bestowed the boon upon him.

According to Agastya Muni's wish, Lord Nārāyaṇa began residing at Veṅkaṭācala.

The Birth of Padmāvatī Devī

Narāyaṇapur was ruled by King Mitravarmā of the Śākha dynasty. His queen, Manorama, gave birth to a

son named Ākāśarāja. Ākāśarāja's wife, Dharaṇī Devī, had no children of her own. While performing the Pūtrakāmeṣṭi Yajña, they were plowing the land when a girl was found. Ākāśarāja adopted this girl and named her Padmāvatī Devī. Through her blessing, Ākāśarāja was granted a son, named Vasudāsa.

One day, Padmāvatī Devī was strolling in a flower garden with her friends when sage Nārada arrived. Padmāvatī Devī and her friends bowed to him. sage Nārada asked Padmāvatī, "Who are you?"

Padmāvatī Devī explained who she was and requested Nārada to share his astrological knowledge. Nārada replied, "You are like Lakṣmī Devī. You possess the qualities of Lakṣmī Devī. Lord Nārāyaṇa will marry you." Having said this, sage Nārada left.

Meeting of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and Padmāvatī Devī

Once, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, mounted on a white horse, arrived at Padmāvatī Devī's flower garden while hunting wild animals. Seeing him, all the women in the garden were astonished. Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara asked Padmāvatī Devī's companions, "Has any wolf come here?"

They replied, "Why have you come to this garden with a bow in your hand? There is no place for violence here. This garden is under the protection of Ākāśarāja. Please leave immediately!"

Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara dismounted from his horse and began to ask the women, "Who are all of you? Specifically, who is this maiden with lotus-like eyes?"

They answered, "O handsome one! This maiden's name is Padmāvatī Devī. She is the daughter of Ākāśarāja and Dharaṇī Devī. We are all her maidservants."

They asked, "Who are you? Where do you live?"

Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara replied, "My name is Ananta. Yogis who engage in meditation call me Kṛṣṇa. The bow I carry is so powerful that even the demigods do not possess such a bow. Those who reside on Veṅkaṭā Mountain call me Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. While hunting wild animals, I came across this garden and saw this maiden. Will she marry me?"

Hearing this, the companions became angry, and Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, mounting his horse, left toward Veṅkaṭāchal.

Padmāvatī Devī's Previous Birth

Vakulamātā, who served Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, came to him and said, "O Lord of the demigods! The food is ready, please accept it."

Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara said to Vakulamātā, "When I was in my Rāma incarnation and in exile with Sītā, Rāvaṇa came to abduct Sītā. Then Agni Deva (the fire god) took Sītā and placed her with his wife, Swāhā Devī, and kept Vedavatī in a hut. Rāvaṇa, mistaking Vedavatī for Sītā, abducted her."

"When I killed Rāvaṇa and Sītā performed Agni Praveśa (the fire ordeal), Agni Deva, along with his wife, brought Sītā back to me and handed her over. He said, 'O Śrī Rāma! This Vedavatī has been meditating for you. She wishes to marry you, please fulfill her wish.'

Sītā also said the same. I then replied to them, 'In this incarnation, I have taken a vow to accept only one wife, so I cannot marry Vedavatī now.' Then I told Vedavatī, 'I will marry you in Kali Yuga. Until then, you stay in Brahmaloka.'"

"During the Pūtrakameṣṭi Yajña, when Ākāśarāja was plowing the land, this Padmāvatī, whom he found, is the same Vedavatī. Therefore, you go and ask Padmāvatī about the marriage."

Vakulamātā bowed to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and set off along the path he had indicated.

Vakulamātā Meeting Padmāvatī Devī's Friends

On the way, after having darśana of Agasteśvara (Lord Śiva) and resting for a while, Vakulamātā was approached by Padmāvatī Devī's friends. Vakulamātā went to them and asked, "O beautiful ladies! Who are you? Where have you come from? What is your purpose in this temple?"

The ladies replied, "We are the maidservants of Padmāvatī Devī, the daughter of Ākāśarāja. We were plucking flowers in the garden with Padmāvatī Devī when a handsome man, riding a white horse and hunting wild animals, arrived. He saw Padmāvatī Devī and said that he would marry her. As soon as we saw him, we became angry and the man left. Immediately after he left, Padmāvatī Devī fainted and fell to the ground.

"We quickly carried Padmāvatī Devī to the king. The king called the brāhmaṇas and asked, 'Why did Padmāvatī faint?' A brāhmaṇa, using his divine vision, observed the event that had taken place in the garden

and said, 'O king! Padmāvatī Devī will marry that man.' The king instructed the brāhmaṇas, 'Perform an abhiṣeka (ritual bath) in Lord Śiva's temple,' and ordered us to prepare the necessary materials for the ritual. We brought all the required materials to the temple as instructed. Now, please tell us who you are and where you live."

Vakulamātā replied, "I live on Veṅkaṭācala." She then told the ladies, "I serve Narāyaṇa on Veṅkaṭācala. I have come to meet Dharaṇī Devī. Will I be able to meet her?"

The friends answered, "You can come with us to meet Dharaṇī Devī." With that, Vakulamātā followed them.

When Vakulamātā was coming to the royal palace with Padmāvatī Devī's friends, a sorceress woman in Nāraṇyapura was proclaiming to everyone, "I know all about the past and the future." Dharaṇī Devī called the sorceress woman, and when she was not looking, Dharaṇī Devī dropped a pearl into colored water and asked, "What is this?" The woman replied that it was a pearl. Dharaṇī Devī said, "This is true! She knows about the past and the future." Then, Dharaṇī Devī took the sorceress woman to Padmāvatī Devī and asked her to explain about her daughter. The sorceress woman narrated the events that took place in the flower garden and said, "That man is Narāyaṇa. Marry your daughter Padmāvatī to Narāyaṇa. This will cure your daughter's mental distress," and then the woman left.

Vakulamātā Meets Dharaṇī Devī

Vakulamātā, along with Padmāvatī Devī's friends, met Dharaṇī Devī in Nārāṇyapura. Dharaṇī Devī gave

them a warm welcome and asked, "Who are you? Where do you live? What is the reason for your visit?" Vakulamātā told Dharaṇī Devī, "I serve Lord Nārāyaṇa in Veṅkaṭācala." She also spoke about the meeting between Lord Nārāyaṇa and Padmāvatī Devī and said, "Lord Nārāyaṇa wishes to marry your daughter. He has sent me to understand your intention."

Dharaṇī Devī said that she would consult her husband and inform her later. She then went to Ākāśarāja and shared everything. Ākāśarāja told Vakulamātā, "It is a great fortune for my daughter to marry Narāyaṇa." He then asked the ministers and the brāhmaṇas, "What is your opinion about Padmāvatī Devī's marriage?" They all agreed, and asked for the auspicious time (muhūrta) to be determined by Bṛhaspati. Ākāśarāja then instructed Bṛhaspati to determine the marriage muhurta. Bṛhaspati selected the muhurta in the month of Vaiśākha (April-May) during the Uttaraphālgunī nakṣatra. Ākāśarāja sent Vakulamātā with the message that Lord Nārāyaṇa should come at the muhurta decided by Bṛhaspati and marry his daughter.

Padmāvatī Devī and Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's wedding

Ākāśarāja sent his son Vasudāsa to invite Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Lord Indra, Lord Candra, Lord Sūrya, and the other inhabitants of the fourteen planetary system for the wedding. He summoned Lord Viśvakarmā and ordered him to decorate the city. All the demigods arrived for the wedding. Ākāśarāja told Candra to prepare Narāyaṇa's favorite dishes and assigned other demigods to various tasks.

At the time of the wedding, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara arrived on Garuḍa, accompanied by Lakṣmī Devī. Padmāvatī Devī came out of the inner palace, riding an elephant, and bowed before Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara placed his garland around Padmāvatī Devī's neck, and Padmāvatī Devī placed the garland of flowers she held in her hands around Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's neck. Then, both of them dismounted from their vehicles and entered the wedding pavilion. Lord Brahmā recited the wedding mantras, and the marriage of Padmāvatī Devī and Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara was completed.

Ākāśarāja gave many gifts to his daughter Padmāvatī Devī. After that, he told the demigods, "You all may return to your respective realms." The demigods praised Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and Padmāvatī Devī, circumambulated them, bowed to them, and returned to their respective realms. Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, along with Padmāvatī Devī and Lakṣmī Devī, began residing in Veṅkaṭācala.

The Story of Vasu and Toṇḍamān

Vasu, a devotee of Lord Nārāyaṇa from the Niṣāda community, lived on Veṅkaṭācala mountain. Vasu took care of the mountain and its trees. Every day, he prepared food and mixed honey in it, offering it as Naivedya to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. One day, after preparing the food, he went with his wife to the forest to collect honey. He instructed his son Vīru, "Guard the food." After a while, Vīru offered some food to the fire and some to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara beneath the tree, and ate the remaining food himself. When Vasu returned with the honey, he found that the food was gone. He asked Vīru, who confessed that he had eaten the food. Vasu

thought that Vīru had eaten the food without offering it to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, so he raised his sword to strike him. At that moment, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara caught Vasu's hand from behind and calmed him, saying, "Your son is a greater devotee than you. He offered the food to me beneath the tree and then ate the remaining food himself."

In the Candra-vaṁśa (lunar dynasty), there was a king named Toṇḍamān. His father was Sudhīr, and his mother was Nandinī. From the age of five, Toṇḍamān was devoted to Lord Nārāyaṇa. He married Princess Padmā from the Pandya kingdom and, after winning the marriage of hundreds of princesses in a Svayaṁvara (marriage contest), settled in Nārāyaṇapura. One day, while hunting on Veṅkaṭācala mountain, Toṇḍamān was chasing an elephant when he spotted a parrot with five colors. He tried to catch the parrot, but it flew away, saying "Śrīnivāsa Śrīnivāsa." Toṇḍamān, in pursuit of the parrot, reached Vasu, the protector of Veṅkaṭācala mountain. Toṇḍamān asked Vasu, "Have you seen a parrot like this?"

Vasu replied, "That parrot is cared for by Lakṣmī Devī. It is very dear to Lakṣmī Devī and Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, and it always resides near Swami Puṣkariṇī." He added, "It is time for Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's worship. I will go and perform the worship, and then return. In the meantime, please stay here." Toṇḍamān said, "I will also come with you and have the darśan (divine sighting) of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara." Vasu agreed, and he took Toṇḍamān to see Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. Both of them offered their obeisances to Swami. Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara accepted the

food that Vasu had offered. Toṇḍamān praised Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and then returned to his kingdom. From that time onward, Toṇḍamān has been regularly visiting and serving Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara.

A brāhmaṇa named Vīraśarmā was traveling with his wife Lakṣmī to bathe the Ganges. Due to her pregnancy, his wife was unable to walk. Vīraśarmā went to Toṇḍamān and explained his situation, saying, "I will bathe in the Ganges and return in six months. In the meantime, please provide shelter for my wife, Lakṣmī." Toṇḍamān agreed and arranged a room for the brāhmaṇa's wife, providing enough grain for six months. Vīraśarmā went to bathe in the Ganges and, while traveling to other sacred places like Kāśī, Ayodhyā, and Badrikāśrama, he returned after two years. Vīraśarmā shared the details of his pilgrimage and asked about his wife. Toṇḍamān replied, "Please stay here." He then went to the room of the brāhmaṇa's wife and found that she was dead, along with her child.

Toṇḍamān, distressed, took a tunnel path and reached Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. He prayed to Lord. Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara said, "Take Lakṣmī, the wife of Vīraśarmā, in a palanquin, carried by your wives, and bring her here to bathe in the Astī Sarovara of Veṅkaṭācala. She will come back to life." Toṇḍamān followed Lord's instructions, and Lakṣmī and her son were revived. Toṇḍamāna then handed them over to Vīraśarmā.

Bhakta Bhīma

Following the orders of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, Toṇḍamān was performing the worship of Lord by

making a golden lotus. At that time, Bhīma, a potter from the village of Kurum, prayed for liberation after having darśan of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara told Bhīma, "Worship me daily with devotion. You will attain liberation when Toṇḍamāna meets you." Bhīma made a deity of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara from clay in his home and began worshiping with clay flowers and Tulsi leaves.

One day, Toṇḍamān saw that the clay flowers and Tulsi leaves had fallen at the feet of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. He asked the Lord, "O Lord! Who has worshiped You with these clay flowers and Tulsi leaves?" Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara informed him about the devotee Bhīma. Toṇḍamān then went to Bhīma's house, paid his respects, and narrated the entire incident. At that moment, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara arrived with Goddess Lakṣmī on Garuḍa and gave darśan to Bhīma. He took Bhīma, along with his wife, to Vaikuṇṭha.

Toṇḍamān handed over his kingdom to his son, Śrīnivāsa, and went to Veṅkaṭācala, where he served Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara for the rest of his life, before finally attaining Vaikuṇṭha.

Toṇḍamān's Previous Birth

In his previous birth, Toṇḍamān was a devotee named Raṅgadāsu. Raṅgadāsu was traveling on a pilgrimage to Veṅkaṭācala when he met a brāhmaṇa named Vaikhānas. Together, they reached Veṅkaṭācala and began serving Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara after having His darśan. Raṅgadāsu dug a well for the flower plants, which came to be known as the "Flower Well." Using the water from this well, he

planted gardens with fragrant flowers such as Mallikā, Kaner, Ājā, Kundā, Mandār, Mālati, Kamal, Gulāb, and Mograā, as well as a Tulasi garden.

Every day, Raṅgadāsu would make garlands of flowers and Tulasi leaves and offer them to Vaikhānas, who in turn offered them to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, Goddess Lakṣmī, and Goddess Padmāvatī.

One day, a Gandharva came to Veṅkaṭācala with his wives. After having darśan of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, he performed worship and later bathed in the local Koṇeru with his wives. Raṅgadāsu, seeing them with a lustful gaze, later calmed his mind and made flower garlands, which he gave to Vaikhānas. Vaikhānas asked, "Why did it take so long?" Raṅgadāsu did not answer.

Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, aware of the event at the Koṇeru, informed Vaikhānas and told Raṅgadāsu, "Due to My māyā, you will serve Me in this life, and in your next birth, you will become a king. After experiencing sensual pleasures, you will perform My devotion and attain Vaikuṇṭha."

Raṅgadāsu served Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara for a hundred years and, after leaving his body, was reborn as Toṇḍamānn, the son of Sudhīra and Nandinī in the Candra-vaṁśa.

3

Services and Sacred sites at Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara temple

Main Gopuram

The main Gopuram[16] of the temple stands 50 feet high. It is also referred to as Padikāvali, Singhadwāra, and Mukhadwāra. The circumambulation of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara is done around this Gopuram from the outside, which is called the Maha Parikrama. Along this parikrama route, one encounters the Tirumala Nambi temple (home), Anantācārya's samādhi, the flower well, the Lord Varāha temple, and Swami Puṣkariṇī.

This path is also used for the festivals and processions of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. The area of this parikrama path spans 16 acres. From this Gopuram, there is a path leading to the darśana of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and to the exit of the temple. The deities here known as 'saṅkhanidhi' and 'Padmanidhi,' are named thus, because one holds a conch (Śaṅkha) and the other holds a lotus (padma).

The crowbar thrown by Anantācārya towards Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara was hung on the wall of the Gopuram. When devotees go for the darśana of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara,

16 A gopuram (or gopura) is a monumental tower, usually ornate, at the entrance of any temple, especially in Southern India.

they can see the inscription 'Anantācārya's crowbar' written on the right side. This crowbar can be seen today also.

The Circumambulation of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara from Inside the Main Gopuram

The circumambulation of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara is done from within the main Gopuram. This circumambulation path was once home to a Sampangi tree, and hence it is called the 'Sampangi Parikrama.'

Along the Sampangi Parikrama route, sugar, chickpea lentils, chickpea flour, jaggery, camphor, sandalwood, cashews, and raisins, among other items, are collected to make laddus. The kitchen for making laddus is also located here. Near the kitchen, there is a well, whose water is used for the kitchen's purposes.

The Darpaṇa maṇḍapam, Śrīraṅga maṇḍapam, Tirumalarāya maṇḍapam, Kalyāṇa maṇḍapam, Dhvajastambha, and the Flower Well are visible along this Sampangi Parikrama route.

Darpaṇa (Addāla) maṇḍapam

In the Darpaṇa maṇḍapam, at noon, Śrīdevi and Bhūdevi, are seated along with Lord Śrī Malayappa in a cradle. Then, the cradle is swung. This is known as the 'Dolotsavam.'

During the swinging of the cradle, the priests chant the Vedas. After this, an offering of Paṃcadārā (sugar), coconut, ghee, and sesame or cashew, prepared into a sweet called 'Paṃca Kajjāyam,' is made. Finally, the Aarti is performed.

Śrīraṅga maṇḍapam

Due to the fear of Mughal invasions, from 1320 to 1360, the festival deity of Lord Śrī Raṅganātha was kept and worshiped at the Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara temple itself. Due to the worship of Lord Śrī Ranganātha being performed there, this pavilion came to be known as the "Śrīraṅga Maṇḍapa." During Diwali, for a month, the festival deity of Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, along with Lord Śrī Malayappa and Śrīdevi-Bhudevi, is placed and worshiped in the Śrīraṅga maṇḍapam.

Tirumalarāya maṇḍapam

This maṇḍapam is located next to the Śrīraṅga maṇḍapam. It was" built by Tirumalarāya, and hence it is named Tirumalarāya maṇḍapam. During the Brahmotsavam, Lord Śrī Malayappa, along with Śrīdevi and Bhudevi, comes here to accept the service. Every day, devotional music is played here for Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara from 6:00 AM to 6:30 AM and from 5:30 PM to 6:00 PM.

Kalyāṇa maṇḍapam

Every day, from 12:00 PM for approximately an hour, the Kalyāṇotsava of Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara takes place in this maṇḍapam, It is called Nitya Kalyāṇam. In this pavilion, festivals such as Pavitraotsava, Puṣpayāga, and Jyeṣṭhābhiṣeka are also celebrated once a year.

Phūlāngī maṇḍapam (Floral Chamber)

The floral garlands offered daily to Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara are made in this chamber. Every day, 14 garlands of flowers are offered to the Lord. The garlands

offered in the morning are removed in the evening, and fresh garlands are offered.

The 14 garlands offered to Lord daily include:

1. Eight cubit[17] long garlands: These are decorated from the Kīrti (crown) to both arms.
2. Two garlands of four cubit long each: These garlands are decorated with Śālagrāma beads, hanging from both arms down to the feet.
3. Three and a half cubit long garland: This garland is draped from the neck to both arms.
4. Two garlands of one and a half cubit length: These garlands are for Śrīdevi and Bhudevi, placed on the chest of Lord.
5. Two one cubit long garlands: These garlands are for the Śaṅkha (conch) and Cakra (discus) in Lord's hands.
6. Two cubit garland: This garland is for Nandaka (the sword) at Lord's waist.
7. Three different garlands hanging from the waist to the feet: One is three cubit long, another is three and a half cubit long, and the third is four cubit long.
8. Two two cubit garlands: These are for decorating around Lord's feet.
9. A garland and a Tulasi mala: These are worn from the neck to the knees.

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17 The cubit is an ancient unit of length that's usually equal to 18 inches (457 mm), or the length of the forearm from the elbow to the tip of the middle finge

Every Thursday evening, during the Phūlāngī (floral) Seva, all of Lord's ornaments are removed, and the above garlands are specially arranged to adorn Lord with flowers.

In this room, floral garlands are also made for Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara's festival deity and other various deities in the temple.

Sampangi Tree and Tamarind (Cinta) Tree

Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya had worshiped these trees. In "Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara Itihāsa Mālā," written by Anantācārya, it is mentioned that the flowers of the Sampangi tree are used in the worship of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. When Toṇḍamān was constructing the outer wall of the Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara temple, he instructed not to remove the Sampangi and Tamarind trees. However, due to the large number of pilgrims, the Devāsthānam (temple authority) has now removed these trees. Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, in search of Lakṣmī Devi, came down to earth from Vaikuṇṭha and spent a significant amount of time under the Tamarind tree located near the Valmīka (ant-hill).

Phūlāngī Kuṇḍa (Flower Well)

The Phūlāngī Kuṇḍa is located near the Darpaṇa maṇḍapam. This well was dug by Rangdāsu. It is the same Rangdāsu who, in his rebirth as Toṇḍamān, rebuilt this well.

The Dhwaja-Stambha and Bali Pīṭha

The Dhwaja-Stambha[18] is made of wood, and the Bali Pīṭha are covered with a golden layer. The flagpole

18 A pole to fly a flag

is adorned with depictions of Garuḍa, Hanumān, and the Kāliya-mardana (Lord Kṛṣṇa subduing Kaliya) along with the symbols of Śaṅkha (conch) and Cakra (discus). The Brahmotsavam begins with the Dhvajārohaṇa.[19] On this day, the Garuḍa flag is hoisted on the Dhwaja-Stambha. Naivedya for Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara is placed on the eight Bali Pīṭhas situated around the temple, and the remaining offering is placed on the Bali pīṭha near the Dhwaja Stambha. On these Bali pīṭhas, offerings are made to the demigods.

The current Dhwaja-Stambha was replaced in 1982. Before 1417, the flagpole was located behind the Garuḍa deity, which was positioned in front of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. Due to the increasing number of pilgrims, it was moved from there to its current position outside the second Gopuram.

Second Gopuram

The Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara Parikrama is performed from within the second Gopuram, known as Vimāna Pradakṣiṇā or Aṅga Pradakṣiṇā. In the early morning, devotees take a bath in Swami Puṣkariṇī and, while still in wet clothes, lie down and perform the parikramā along this path, which is why it is also called the Aṅga Pradakṣiṇā Path.

Along this path, there are several sacred sites, including:

- Lord Varadarāja temple
- Garuḍa temple

19 Flag hoisting ceremony

- Yajñaśālā (sacred fire altar)
- Vakulamātā temple
- Caraṇāmṛta Distribution Site
- Dāna Rāshi (donation) Counting Room (Parakāmaṇi)
- Candan Kṣetra (sandalwood room)
- Darśana of Lord Vimāna Veṅkaṭeśvara swami (Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara above the deity room)
- Saṅkīrtana Ārā (collection of hymns by Tāllapākā Annamācārya)
- Deity of Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya
- Deity of Yoga Narasimha
- Śrīvāri Hundī (donation box)
- Viṣvaksena temple
- Golden Well (Baṅgāru Bāvi)

Next to the Baṅgāru Bāvi is the Ankurārpaṇa maṇḍapam, which houses the festive deities of Hanuman, Sugriva, Viṣvaksena, Garuḍa, Ādiśeṣa, and Aṅgada.

Lord Varadarāja temple

As you pass the second Gopuram, you will find the Lord Varadarāja temple to your left. The deity of Lord Varadarāja is five feet tall. Lord Varadarāja is offered naivedya and āratī three times a day. On the day of His divine appearance in Kāñcīpuram, a special abhiṣekam and āratī are performed for this deity.

Viṣvaksena temple

The Viṣvaksena temple is located near Hundī. In the Vaikhānasa Agama, Viṣvaksena holds a very important

position. In Vaishnava rituals and temple services, Viṣvaksena is worshipped first, and during festivals, a procession of Viṣvaksena is conducted before other deities. Viṣvaksena is the commander of Lord Nārāyaṇa's army in Vaikuṇṭha.

Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's Kitchen (Vaṇṭaśālā)

This Vaṇṭaśālā is located near the Lord Varadarāja temple and it is here that the food for Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara is prepared. In this kitchen, food is prepared not only for Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, but also for Lord Varāha. The Vakulamātā temple is also located here. Vakulamātā used to prepare and offer food for both Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and Lord Varāha.

Garuḍa temple

As one passes the second Gopuram, the Garuḍa temple is located. Garuḍa stands in front of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. Garuḍa is six feet tall, with its wings spread wide, standing with both hands raised in reverence.

Jaya Vijaya

In front of Garuḍa are the Jaya Vijaya deities. These Panchadhātu deities of Jaya Vijaya were installed by Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya.

Ghanṭa maṇḍapa

Between Garuḍa and Jaya Vijaya, there is a pavilion with the two large bells. Hence, this pavilion is called the Ghanṭa maṇḍapa. When Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara is offered naivedya, these bells are rung. In this Ghantā maṇḍapa, the Suprabhāta is recited every morning at three o'clock for Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. After the Suprabhāta,

the details of the pancanga[20] and the income from the Hundī are also announced. Every Wednesday morning, a special Sahasra Kalaśa Abhiṣeka is performed for Bhoga Śrīnivāsa, Lord Śrī Malayappa, and Viṣvaksena. On Śrī Rāma Navami day, worship is performed for Śrī Sītā Rāma Lakṣmaṇa Hanumān, and on Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭami day, Śrī Rukmiṇī Kṛṣṇa is worshipped.

Snapan maṇḍapa

After passing Jaya Vijaya, the Snapan maṇḍapa is located. In this pavilion, both the ornaments of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and the wealth accumulated in the Hundī are securely stored.

Rāmula Vāri Meḍa

Following the Snapan maṇḍapa, the next pavilion is called Rāmula Vāri Meḍa. Once, the deities of Sītā, Rāma, and Lakṣmaṇa were kept here, which is why it was named Rāmula Vāri Meḍa. These deities have now been transferred to the Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's deity room. When Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya was listening to the Rāmāyaṇa from Tirumalāmbi in Tirupati, a brāhmaṇa gifted him these deities of Sītā, Rāma, and Lakṣmaṇa.

Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya offered these deities to Tirumalāmbi, who placed them in Rāmula Vāri Meḍa and performed worship. In addition to these deities, there were also deities of Hanumān, Sugrīva, Aṅgada, Ādiśeṣa, Garuḍa, and Viṣvaksena. These deities have now been relocated to the Aṅkurārpaṇa maṇḍapa.

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20 Vāra (day of the week), tithi (lunar day), nakṣatra (star), yoga, karaṇa, varṣa (year), samvatsara

Śayana maṇḍapa

After Rāmula Vāri Meḍa, the Śayana maṇḍapa is located. In the Śayana maṇḍapa, the Veda mantras and Puruṣa-sūkta are recited. During the night, the festival deity of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara (Deity of Bhoga Śrīnivāsa) is laid to rest in a golden cradle here, and a special form of worship is performed in seclusion.In this very Śayana maṇḍapa, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara is offered naivedya. Special naivedya is offered in the deity room. Devotees who participate in the daily Suprabhāta service, Puṣpa sevā, Sahasranāmārchan service, Sahasrakalaśa Abhiṣeka on Wednesdays, Tiruppāvad service on Thursdays, and Abhiṣeka service on Fridays are allowed to stand in the Śayan maṇḍapa and have the opportunity to have Darśana of the Lord.

Kulśekhara Paḍī (Threshold)

Beyond the Śayana Maṇḍapa lies the Deity room of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. To enter the Garbha-gṛha, one must cross the threshold. To enter the deity room, one must cross the threshold, which is called Kulśekhara Paṛī. It is called "Kulśekhara Maharaja" because Kulśekhara Maharaja once prayed Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, saying, "Lord! If I become your threshold, I will always be able to see you." Therefore, this threshold is called Kulśekhara Paṛī.

Garbhagṛha (Deity room)

In the 13-foot high deity room, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara is seated in the form of a Śālāgrāma śilā, which is eight feet in size. Deity room also houses the festival deity of Sudarśana, Sītā-Rāma-Lakṣmaṇa, and Rukmiṇī-Kṛṣṇa. Additionally, there are four festival deities of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara :

1. Deity of Bhoga Śrīnivāsa
2. Deity of Koluvu Śrīnivāsa
3. Deity of Ugṛa Śrīnivāsa
4. Deity of Lord Malayappa

These festival deities are bathed daily, and they are adorned with garments, ornaments, and garlands of flowers. In this deity room, Śālāgrāma śilās and an Akhaṇḍa Deepa[21] are also present. While offering flowers to the Lord in the morning, the Divya Prabandham (hymns of the Āḻvārs) are sung. At noon, while reciting the Veṅkaṭeśvara Sahasranāma from the Padma Purāṇa, Tulasi leaves are offered. During Dhanurmasa,[22] Bilva leaves are used instead of Tulasi. The worship of the Lord is done according to the Vaikhānasa Āgama scriptures. The spire above the deity room is called Ānanda Nīlaya, which was brought and established by Garuḍa from Vaikuṇṭha.

Darśana Vidhi

The descendants of the Gwālās who are visiting Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara for the first time are the first ones to receive Darśana of the Lord every morning. At 3 a.m., the Śrī Vaiṣṇavācārya, descendants of Annamācārya, the temple officials, and the servants gather at the Ghanṭa maṇḍapa.

A Gwālā opens the lock of the Bangāru Vākīlī (Golden Gate), lights the lamps, and has the Darśana of the Lord.

21 Lamp which never shut off

22 Dhanurmāsam is a month in the Hindu calendar that corresponds to the Sagittarius zodiac sign and usually falls from mid-December to January 14. It is also known as Chāpa Māsa, Kodanda Māsa, and Karmuka Māsa.

After that, the priest recites the hymns written by Prativādi Bhayankara Aṇṇan...

kausalyā suprajā rāma pūrvā sandhyā pravartate ।
uttiṣṭha nara-śārdūla kartavyaṃ daivamāhnikam ॥

"Hey Kausalyā's virtuous son, Rāma, the dawn is breaking in the eastern direction. O best of men, the time for Sandhyā-vandan (morning worship) has arrived, wake up."(1)

This verse is from the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa. When Viśvāmitra was taking Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa with him, on the first morning, he woke them up with this verse.

Prativādi Bhayaṅkara Aṇṇan made this verse the first verse of his Suprabhāta Stotra to wake up Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara from his sleep.

uttiṣṭho uttiṣṭha govinda uttiṣṭha garuḍadhvaja ।
uttiṣṭha kamalākānta trailokyaṃ maṅgalaṃ kuru ॥

"O Govinda! Wake up. O Garuḍa-bannered Deva! Wake up. O beloved of Lakṣmī! Wake up. Bestow auspiciousness upon the three worlds." (2)

This verse is recited to awaken Lord Viṣṇu, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Rama, and other deities enshrined in the temple of Narayana.

mātaḥ samasta jagatāṃ madhukaiṭabhāre ।
vakṣo vihāriṇi manohara divyamūrte ।
śrīsvāmīni śritajanapriya dānaśīla ।
śrī veṅkaṭeśvara dāyite tava suprabhātam ॥

"The mother of all worlds, the one who resides on the chest of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, the one with a charming divine form, the Jagadīśwarī (Queen of

the Universe), the one who fulfills the desires of the devotees, the beloved consort of Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara – Lakṣmī Devi, may you have a blessed morning (The dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up!)." (3)

tava suprabhātam aravinda locane ।
bhavatu prasanna mukhacandra maṇḍale ।
vidhī śaṅkarendra vanitābhir arccite ।
vṛṣaśailānātha dāyite dayānidhe ॥

"O Lakṣmī Devi, with eyes like lotus petals, with a face as beautiful as the moon, worshiped by Sarasvatī, Pārvatī, and Śacī Devi, beloved consort of Vṛṣaśaila Nātha and Dāyanidhi – may you have a blessed morning. The morning is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (4)

prativādi bhayaṅkara aṇṇan here is waking Lakṣmī Devi, who resides in the heart of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, from her sleep. After this, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara is awakened in the following manner:

"Atri and the other seven great sages, having completed their Sandhyāvaṁdan (evening worship), are coming from the Milky Way to offer lotus flowers at Your Lotus Feet, and they are waiting. O Śeṣācalapati (Lord of the Serpent Mountain), dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (5)

"O Śeṣācalapati! Lord Śiva, Lord Brahmā, Kumārasvāmi, Indra, and other demigods are chanting the glories of Your Vāmana (Narasimha, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa) and other incarnations. Bṛhaspati is

announcing the charts of today's time and date. The dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (6)

"The air is slowly blowing, carrying the fragrance of newly bloomed lotus, coconut, and other flowers. O Veṅkaṭeśvara, Śeṣācalapati! The dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (7)

"O Śeṣācalapati! The beautiful parrots kept in cages, after eating a little, are singing sweet songs after eating the remaining bananas and pāyasam. O Śeṣācalapati! dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (8)

"O Ananta! Nārada is playing his veena with sweet notes, dancing and singing the divine glories of You. O Śeṣācalapati! The dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (9)

"The bees, feeding on the honey from the lotus flowers in the ponds, are coming to glorify You. O Śeṣācalapati! The dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (10)

"O Śeṣādri-nātha, Veṅkaṭeśvara! The gopīs of the cowherds are churning yogurt, and the sound of the churning is echoing in all the directions. It seems as if the sound and its echo are causing a dispute between the pots of yogurt and the directions. O Lord! O Śeṣācalapati! The dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (11)

"O Śeṣācalapati! The bees, friends of the sun, sitting on the lotus flowers, are making a sound with their

buzzing sound, trying to rob the black glow of the blue lotus with their own radiance. The dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (12)

"O Divine Lord, You are the bestower of boons. You are the friend of all beings. O Veṅkaṭācalapati,[23] You are the repository of boundless grace like the ocean for all worlds. You are the abode of Lakṣmī Devi's chest. You are of divine form. O Veṅkaṭeśvara! dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (13)

"Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and Sanandana, having bathed in the sacred Puṣkarīṇi, have purified themselves and are waiting for You, without any concern for the beating of their heads by the gatekeepers. O Śeṣācalapati! The day is rising in the eastern direction, wake up." (14)

"O Veṅkaṭeśvara! People daily call Your abode on this mountain by names such as Śeṣaśaila, Garuḍācala, Veṅkaṭādri, Nārāyaṇādri, Vṛṣabhādri, Vṛṣādri. O Veṅkaṭācalapati, the dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (15)

"Demigods Iśāna, Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirṛti, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Kubera, and the other Aṣṭadrikpāla (eight directional guardians), placing their hands on their heads, are bowing to You and waiting to serve You. O Veṅkaṭācalapati, the dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (16)

"O Lord! Garuḍa, Mṛgarāja, Ādiśeṣa, Gajendra, and Aśvarāja are waiting for Your approval to display

23 Śrīnivāsa

their powers. O Veṅkaṭācalapati, the dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (17)

"The Sun, Moon, Aṅgāraka, Budha, Bṛhaspati, Śukra, Śani, Rāhu, and Ketu, the nine planets, serve You as the servants of Your servants. O Veṅkaṭācalapati, the dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (18)

"O Master! Those who come near you and purify their heads with the dust of your feet do not desire heaven or salvation. They are concerned that in the coming kalpa, after the end of this kalpa, they might not have the fortune of serving You. O Veṅkaṭācalapati, the dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (19)

"People traveling to heaven or towards liberation, upon seeing Your temple, gopuram, and śikhara on the way, become so delighted that they abandon the wish for heaven or liberation and stop right there to have Your darśana (vision). O Veṅkaṭācalapati, the dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (20)

"O Devadhipati, You are the husband of Śrī and Bhū (the goddesses of wealth and earth), the ocean of qualities like compassion, the sole refuge of all worlds, and Ananta and Garuḍa serve Your feet. O Veṅkaṭācalapati, the dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (21)

"O Veṅkaṭeśvara! You have a lotus-like navel. You are Puruṣottama, Vāsudeva, Vaikuṇṭha, and Mādhava. You are the protector of the people,

holding the cakra in Your hand and You are adorned with the Śrīvatsa mark. Like a Kalpavṛkṣa (wish-fulfilling tree) You protect those who seek refuge in You. O Veṅkaṭācalapati, the dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (22)

"O Lord! You, who have the divine form that destroys the pride of Kāma (Cupid), Your gaze constantly roams over the breasts of young maidens who are like a lotus bud. You are the Lord of fame. O Veṅkaṭācalapati, the dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (23)

"O Veṅkaṭeśvara! You have incarnated as Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Narasimha, Vāmana, Parśurāma, Śrī Rāma, Balarāma, Śrī krṣṇa, and Kalki. O Veṅkaṭācalapati, the dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (24)

"O Lord! The Vedic devotees, immersed in bliss, are waiting to render service to You. They carry holy Ganga water in golden pitchers, perfumed with the fragrance of cardamom and camphor. O Veṅkaṭācalapati, the dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (25)

"O Lord! The sun is rising. Lotus flowers are blooming. The chirping of the birds is echoing in the directions. To obtain your grace Śrī Vaiṣṇavas offer their prayers to You. O Veṅkaṭācalapati, the dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (26)

"O Lord! Demigods like Lord Brahmā, noble souls like Maharishi Sanandana and yogis are present

in your service with auspicious items for Your worship. O Veṅkaṭācalapati, the dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (27)

"O Lord! You are the abode of Lakṣmī. You are the ocean of good qualities and an appropriate bridge to cross the ocean of the material world. O glorious One! who is understood through the Vedānta, You remain under the control of Your devotees. O Veṅkaṭācalapati, the dawn is breaking in the eastern direction, wake up." (28)

"Those who read this Suprabhāta Stotra with devotion every day, and thus remember Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara attain liberation with ease." (29)

In this manner, the priest, while reciting the Suprabhāta Stotra, places his head at the feet of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and offers his obeisances. After this, the priest goes to the Śayana maṇḍapa (sleeping hall) where Bhoga-Śrīnivāsa is situated in a golden cradle, claps his hands to wake Him up, touches His feet in reverence, and takes Him to the deity room.[24]

Then, the priest makes Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara perform dantadhāvan (tooth brushing) and ācamana (a purification ritual with water), offers Him cow's milk, and performs the āratī and then, the golden gate (called Vākīlī) is completely opened. At that moment, the priest, devotees with Suprabhāta tickets, and the people of the Annamācārya lineage come for the darśana of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. The Tīrthaṁ (holy water from the Lord's feet) and the Śaṭhārī (the footprints of the Lord) placed

24 Where deities are being installed and worshiped

by Lord Brahmā during the night for Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara are first received by the priest and then distributed to the other priests and devotees present there.

Every Thursday, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara is adorned with a small tilaka (mark on the forehead) without flowers, jewelry, or large marks, wearing only a dhoti and uttarīya (upper cloth). This attire is called 'Gopāla Veśa'.

Annamācārya, having witnessed the Netrotsava Darśana (Eye Festival) on Friday, thus praised Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara: 'On Friday morning, I had the darśana of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, who holds Alamelumaṅgammā on His chest, adorned with only a dhoti and uttarīya, without any jewelry.'

Abhiṣeka (Bathing Ceremony)

The descendants of the Tirumalanaṃbi lineage perform the abhiṣeka of the Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's festival deities with the holy water brought from the Ākāśagaṅgā Tīrtha and adorn Them with clothes and jewels. Every Friday, the abhiṣeka of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara is performed using fragrant substances such as Pachai-Karpūra, Pūnugu, Candanam, Javvā, and others. Lakṣmī Devi, resides on the chest of the Lord, is also smeared with haldi (turmeric). Then, a tilaka is applied with sixteen tolas of green camphor and one and a half tolas of kastūrī (musk), and the Lord is dressed in a silken dhoti of twenty-four hands in length and four hands in width, and a silken uttarīya (upper garment) of twelve hands in length and two hands in width. Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara is adorned with garlands of fourteen flowers, Tulsī garlands, and forty-nine ornaments. As

the Sahasranāma kīrtana (chanting of the thousand names) is being sung, Tulsī leaves are offered.

Śayana Ārātī

Tarigoṇḍa Veṅgamāmbā used to offer āratī to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara at the time of closing the temple at night. Even today, after offering ārātī, Bhoga-Śrīnivāsa is put to sleep in the golden cradle. Annamācārya sang many kīrtanas in solitude, two of which convey the following sentiments:

"O Mukunda! O Govinda! O giver of infinite bliss! O father of Madan (Pradyumna)! Come here! I have brought milk in a beautiful golden vessel. The gopīs say, You are a thief. Here, come in front of me! The son of Devakī, You lifted Govardhana as Your umbrella. Mukunda who roams around with pride after breaking Kansa's ego and conquering the city of Mathura! Come here! Mukunda, the bestower of all prosperity! May you be blessed."

"O Veṅkaṭaramaṇa! Sixteen thousand gopīs are swinging the swing while looking at You with their loving eyes.The world-renowned protector of the cowherd boys! Acyuta! Ananta! May You rest in the golden palace. The devotees are glorifying You. Śrīdevī and Bhūdevī are serving Your feet. Now, rest peacefully."

Naivedya (Bhoga)

At Suprabhāta time (early morning), butter, milk, and sugar are offered to the Lord. After Suprabhāta, jaggery mixed with sesame powder is offered. This is followed by the chanting of the Sahasranāma (Thousand Names).

After which various foods such as Pulihora (tamarind rice), Poṅgaḷ, Cīni-Poṅgaḷ (sweet pongal), Laddū, Vadā, and Appam are offered outside the deity room, while inside the deity room, curd-rice is offered in a broken clay pot.

In the afternoon, after the Aṣṭottara-śatanāmārchana (chanting of 108 names), Pulihora, Poṅgaḷ, curd-rice, Cīni-Poṅgaḷ, Laddū, Vadā, Appam, pure rice, mixed rice, Sīrā, Pāyasam, Kesarī Bhāta, Khīra, and Kadambaṁ are offered.

In the evening, after the Aṣṭottara-śatanāmārchana, Cīni-Poṅgaḷ, Poṅgaḷ, Pulihora, and Kadambaṁ are offered.

After the Ekānt Seva (solitary service), milk, fruits, dates, and sweetmeats made from sugar are offered as naivedya. During the procession and festivals, numerous other naivedya offerings are made, with special offerings also presented during special pujas.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Nāma

The following names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are included in the Sahasranāma (Thousand Names) recitation in the morning for Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, and in the Aṣṭottara-śatanāmārchana (recitation of 108 names) in the afternoon and evening:

- Oṁ Devakī Garbha Sambhūtāya Namaḥ
- Oṁ Yaśodāīkṣaṇa Lalitāya Namaḥ
- Oṁ Vasudeva Kṛta Stotrāya Namaḥ
- Oṁ Nanda Gopa Manoharāya Namaḥ
- Oṁ Nīlakuntalāya Namaḥ
- Oṁ Tṛṇāvarta Vināśāya Namaḥ

- Oṁ Garg Rohita Nāmāṅkitāya Namaḥ
- Oṁ Vasudevāya Namaḥ
- Oṁ Gopikā Stanyapāyine Namaḥ
- Oṁ Balabhadrānujāya Namaḥ
- Oṁ Vatsajit Namaḥ
- Oṁ Navanītā Pahartre Namaḥ
- Oṁ Vatsāntakāya Namaḥ
- Oṁ Bakadveṣiṇe Namaḥ
- Oṁ Mahājagara Chaṇḍāgnye Namaḥ
- Oṁ Krṣhṇāya Namaḥ
- Oṁ Kṛṣṇa Sakhāya Namaḥ

Gvālā Vaṃśa (cowherds men)

The Gvālā community, who were the first to witness the divine darśana of Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, still visit the temple every morning to have the first darśana. While taking the festival idols out of the deity room for festivals and bringing them back, they walk ahead carrying lamps and saying "Give way to Śrīvāri." The Gvālā community also plays a role in bringing the priests to perform their service at the temple.

Deity of Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya

Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya had entered into Jīva Samādhi[25] at Śrīraṅgam. Knowing this, Anantācārya was deeply distressed. Due to this sorrow he did not

25 "Jīva Samādhi" refers to a highly advanced state of samādhi (deep meditative absorption) where an enlightened being, often a siddha puruṣa (perfected soul) or ācārya (spiritual teacher), enters a state of eternal meditation while still being physically alive.

perform the flower seva to Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, and did not even go to have darśana of the deity.

Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara came to Anantācārya and said, "Why are you not making a garland of flowers and Tulsi garland for me, and why are you not coming to see me?" Anantācārya replied, "Our Guru Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya has gone to Vaikuṇṭha. Due to the sorrow of his departure, I am unable to serve you."

Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara responded, "My devotees leave their bodies according to their own will. Likewise, Rāmānujācārya has left his body according to his wish. Rāmānujācārya is not only your guru, but he is My guru also! He made me bear the Śaṅkha (conch) and Cakra (discus). I feel the same sorrow as you do at his departure. You have made a deity of Rāmānujācārya. If you give me that deity, I will install it in my temple."

Anantācārya agreed to praposal and said, "You may take the deity." Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara then appeared in a dream to the king and instructed him to establish the deity of Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya in front of his hundī.[26] The king did as instructed. Now, the deity of Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya is installed in front of Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara's hundī, and we are able to have His darśana.

This deity, which appears to be engaged in writing Bhāṣya (commentary), is thus called Bhāṣyakāra.[27] Annamācārya praised this deity of Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya in the following way:

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26 Donation box

27 The commentator

"Bhāṣyakāra has elevated the ignorant souls, who know nothing, to the status of ācārya (spiritual teacher). By the grace of Śrī Hari, who returned the lost Vedās to Lord Brahmā, he acquired knowledge of all the scriptures and, by appearing in Kaliyuga, he spread the knowledge of these scriptures to everyone."

"When the whole earth was submerging in the waters, Ādinārāyaṇa gave shelter to the demigods and by the grace of Vaṭapatraśāyī [28], Bhāṣyakāra dispelled contrary philosophies and showed the path to liberation."

"Bhāṣyakāra was born out of the mercy of Sri Venkateswara, who shows the path of liberation by displaying his lotus like divine footprints. By the influence of the Nārāyaṇa mantra, Bhāṣyakāra has erased our sins."

Lord Śrī Yoga Nṛsiṃha

The deity of Lord Yoga Nṛsiṃha is situated near the deity of Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya. This Lord Yoga Nṛsiṃha was brought and installed in the temple by Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya on the Tirumalā Hills. On the occasion of Nṛsiṃha Caturdaśī, Annamācārya glorified the deity of Lord Yoga Nṛsiṃha in the following manner:

"He is the Narahari, seated with the Goddess of all wealth, Lakṣmī, on his thigh, bestowing darśana and spreading a sweet smile. Lakṣmīnṛsiṃha, adorned with jewels on the hood of Śeṣanāga, is blessing His devotees and offering them boons."

28 Child form of Ādinārāyaṇa lying on the leaf of a banyan tree

"Narahari, seated on Śeṣa's bed in the golden palaces, enjoying the dance of celestial nymphs, Narahari is revealing his grandeur. Glorious and beautifully adorned, displaying royal splendor, Lakṣmīnṛsiṃha resides near us."

"This form of Lord Nṛsiṃha is also unique, in which He has seated Lakṣmī on His left thigh. As He accepts worship, He wears golden bracelets, with one leg stretched down and the other leg bent. Lord Lakṣmīnṛsiṃha, is gloriously adorned in the seven hills of Veṅkaṭādri and the Ahobīla region with pride and glory."

Glories of Katāha Tīrtha

Katāha Tīrtha is located in front of the Hundī. After the Abhiṣeka (ritual bathing) of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, water comes into a pond, which is called Kataḥ Tīrtha. Sūta Gosvāmī explained the greatness of Kataḥ Tīrtha to the sages, saying:

"The greatness of Kataḥ Tīrtha is known only to Lord Śiva. All holy rivers, like Gaṅgā and Yamunā, come and serve Kataḥ Tīrtha. Bathing in this tīrtha destroys all sins and grants liberation."

Sūta Gosvāmī continued with the story of Keśava:

"Near the bank of the Tungabhadrā River, there was a son of Padmanābha named Keśava. Keśava spent his time indulging in vices like alcohol, meat, adultery, and gambling. One day, to gain wealth, he killed a Brāhmaṇa. As a result, he incurred the sin of Brahmahatyā (killing a Brahman). Keśava went to his father, Padmanābha,

and explained his situation, seeking help. Padmanābha went to Bharadvāja Muni and prayed for his son's redemption. The sage advised, 'There is a tīrtha on the banks of the Suvarṇamukhārī river at the foot of Veṅkaṭācala Mountain called Kataḥ Tīrtha. Have your son bathe in that tīrtha.' Padmanābha followed the advice, and by bathing in Kataḥ Tīrtha, his son was freed from his sins."

In addition to the temples mentioned above, there are several other sub-temples in the Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara temple.

4

The Festivals of Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara

The Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara temple celebrates a total of 433 festivals throughout the year. Some of the major festivals include:

- Nitya Kalyāṇam
- Viśiṣṭa Pūjā
- Aṣṭadala Pāda Padmārādhana
- Sahasra Kalaśābhiṣekaṁ
- Tiruppāvaḍa Sevā
- Pūlāṅgī Sevā
- Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī
- Śrī rāma Navamī
- Varāha Dvādaśī
- Lord Varadarāja Āvīrbhāvaṁ
- Brahmotsavaṁ
- Ḍolotsavaṁ
- Sahasra Dīpālankaraṇam
- Ratha Saptamī
- Vaikuṇṭha Ekādaśī
- Puṣpa Yāgaṁ
- Padmāvatī Parīṇayaṁ
- Pavitrotsavaṁ
- Ūñjāl Sevā
- Jyeṣṭhābhiṣekaṁ
- Vasantotsavaṁ
- Abhidayā Abhiṣekaṁ
- Puppi Pallḷi
- Koil Āḻvār Tirumañjanaṁ
- Pūra Abhiṣekaṁ
- Teppotsavaṁ

Below are the details of several festivals:

Jyeṣṭhābhiṣekaṁ: This festival, celebrated in the month of Jyeṣṭha (typically during the summer), is dedicated to reducing the heat of the summer season and ensuring ample rainfall during the upcoming

monsoon. It is held in Vaishnava temples during the Jyeṣṭhā Nakṣatra. The festival involves a special abhiṣeka performed for three days, where 108 kalaśas (water pots) are filled with water and used to perform the abhiṣeka for three hours every day. Due to the timing of the festival, it is called Jyeṣṭhābhiṣekaṁ. After the abhiṣeka, the deity is adorned, and a procession (Śobhāyātrā) is carried out.

Vasantotsavaṁ: Dedicated to Śrīdevī and Bhūdevī, this festival is celebrated during the Vasant ṛtu (spring season). It is also known as Upaśamanotsavaṁ, as it provides relief from the previous season's intense heat. During this festival, fragrant flowers and various types of sweet fruits are offered as naivedya.

Aṇṇamācārya described the Vasantotsavaṁ as follows:

"The pilgrimage paths shine in the moonlight, andthough no wind stirs, flowers fall as if carried by a gentle breeze. Some people dance in joy, while others sing sweet melodies. During this time, Lord takes a light meal, chews tāmbūla, andinhales the fragrance of sandalwood. Women pour fragrant water over the heads of the Lord and the Devi. Amidst such beautiful scenes, Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, with Alamelumaṅga (Lakṣmī), joyfully celebrates the Vasantotsavaṁ, relishing numerous offerings."

Viśiṣṭa Pūjā: The main service, Viśiṣṭa Pūjā, is held every Monday at 6 AM. This service is performed in the Kalyāṇa maṇḍapa of Saṁpangi Parikrama, where Śrīdevi and Bhūdevi are worshipped along with Lord Śrī Malayappa.

Sahasra Kalaśābhiṣekaṁ: The main service, Sahasra Kalaśābhiṣekaṁ takes place every Wednesday at 6 AM in front of the Golden Vākilī in Tirumalā. This involves the abhiṣeka of the deities of Śrīnivāsa with Śrīdevi and Bhūdevi using pañcāmṛta (five nectars) and water from a thousand kalaśas (pots). This ritual is called Sahasra Kalaśābhiṣekaṁ.

Tiruppāvaḍa Sevā (Annakūṭa Utsava): On Thursdays at 6 AM, Tiruppāvaḍa Sevā is performed as part of the Annakūṭa Utsava. During this service, all the ornaments of Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara (the main deity) are removed, and the tilaka is thinned to make the eyes of the deity more prominent. Then, a large mound of pulihora[29] is prepared, resembling a peak. This mound is decorated with jalebī, chaklī, coconut, chandan (sandalwood paste), kumkum, and dīpa (lamp). The mound of pulihora is offered directly to Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara in the deity room. After the offering, Vedapaṇḍitas (Vedic scholars) chant the Vedas and Śrīnivāsa Gadyam.

Pūlāṅgī Sevā: Every Thursday at 8 PM, the flower service, known as Pūlāṅgī Sevā, is performed for the Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, conducted in complete solitude. The priests decorate the deity entirely with flower garlands. After the service, devotees can have the darśana (sight) of Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara in his floral decoration.

Aṣṭadala Pāda Padmārādhanā Sevā: This service has been ongoing since 1984. Every Tuesday at 9:30 AM, 108 Aṣṭadala (eight-petaled) golden lotus flowers are

29 Tamarind rice

offered to worship the Lord. Each flower is made of gold and adorned with precious gems.

Teppotsavaṁ (Boat festival): For five consecutive days each year, the boat festival is celebrated on the Swami Puṣkariṇī. This festival is known as Teppotsavaṁ. On the first day (Ekādaśī), Sītā, Śrī Rāma, and Lakṣmaṇa participate, on the second day (Dvādaśī), Rukmiṇī and Śrī Kṛṣṇa join, and on the last three days, Śrīdevi and Bhūdevi along with Lord Śrī Malayappa take part in the boat festival. Annamācārya composed several kīrtanas on this boat festival, and one of the kīrtanas expresses the following sentiment:

""You have many different types of boat festivals. You Celebrated boat festival by making a snake into a boat in the ocean of milk, At the time of deluge You remained floating on the Banyan leaf in the ocean; During the churning of the milk ocean, You made Mandara mountain float; You swam in the Yamunā river while dancing on the hood of Kāliya Nāga; You travel on boats made from the labour and sweat of sixteen thousand gopīs and O Lord! today, you are celebrating the boat festival in Swami Puṣkariṇī. O Lord! Please tell us which of these Teppotsav (boat festival) is your favourite?"

Brahmotsavaṁ: Lord Brahmā along with the demigods celebrated festivals at Veṅkaṭācala after having the darśana of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. These festivals are known as Brahmotsavaṁ. During this festival, Lord Brahmā lit a lamp in the Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara temple, which has been continuously burning ever since. This lamp is called Akhanda Deepa. Throughout the festival,

the deity of Lord Śrī Malayappa, accompanied by Śrī Devi and Bhū Devi, is paraded on various Vāhana,[30] including the Śeṣa Vāhana, Haṁsa Vāhana, Siṁha Vāhana, Moti Pālaki, Sarvabhūpāla Vāhana, Garuḍa Vāhana, Hanumanta Vāhana, Gaja Vāhana, Sūryaprabhā Vāhana, Candraprabhā Vāhana, and Aśva Vāhana. On the final day, the Sudarśana cakra is bathed in the Swami Puṣkariṇī, in a festival called Cakra Snāna. Every day of Brahmotsavaṁ, the Sudarśana cakra procession takes place before the procession of Lord and Śrī Devi-Bhū Devi.

Annamācārya praised the Brahmotsavaṁ with the following kīrtana:

"Praise the one who shines on His vehicle with great joy. Seated between Śrī Devi and Bhū Devi on a golden chariot with the Garuḍa flag, O devotees! Come forward and pull the chariot. Apsarās are dancing, the Gandharvas are singing, and Viśvaksena is clearing the path as the commander of the army."

"Brahmotsavaṁ comes during the rainy season. Considering this journey as an austerity, people come from far away places, from all directions with their families, relatives and friends even during the rainy season.Carrying bundles, bags, baskets, valuable ornaments, elephants, horses, and their wives, kings, village heads, lords, and intelligent people, without worrying about the rain, come to have the darśana of Veṅkaṭeśvara."

"Apsarās are dancing and singing joyfully. Garuḍa roams in the streets on a golden chariot, and the

30 Cart

demigods and sages nod their heads in love. Śrī Hari, the one who bears the earth, conquers all the directions on Indra's chariot, while Śeṣādri, Lord Brahmā, and Lord Śiva are serving the Lord. Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, along with Alamelumaṅga rides on the chariot, and Nārada and other saints are glorifying the Lord."

"How did Lord learn to ride so many different kinds of vehicles? Therefore, we glorify you so much. Garuḍa rode the vehicle to abduct the Pārijāta, Lord rode a chariot to rescue the Brahman girls, Lord rode the Puṣpaka Vimāna while returning to Ayodhya with Sītā, Lord rode on Hanumān during the battle against Rāvaṇa, Lord rode a horse to destroy adharma during the Kalki avatar, and now He rides a palanquin on Veṅkaṭādri."

"To fulfill the desires of people like us, the Lord of the demigods rode the divine chariot. To bring back the Brahman boys to life, He drives a silver chariot and crosses the oceans in a single day. As Śrī Rāma, Lord rode Indra's chariot in extreme anger, to attack Rāvaṇa. While searching for the directions, He returned to Ayodhya with Sītā on the Puṣpaka Vimāna. Lord Viṣṇu rode the chariot and defeated the earth-shaking Narakasura. After defeating the enemies, Lord rode the Wedding Chariot with Rukmiṇī. Now, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, along with Alamelumaṅga is riding the chariot on Veṅkaṭādri."

"In Brahmotsavaṁ, Lord first rides on the Śeṣa Vāhana with Śrī Devi and Bhū Devi. The next day, he rides the small Śeṣa Vāhana. The head of Ādi Śeṣa with a thousand hoods shines like a vajra. The thousand hoods of Ādi Śeṣa, adorned with ruby, remain as a shadow of Śrī Hari. Ādi Śeṣa is highly skilled in praising Śrī Hari with

his thousand tongues. Whenever the demigods go for prayer, they first pay obeisances to Ādi Śeṣa who rests near Lord Nārāyaṇa. Ādi Śeṣa is the bed for Veṅkaṭapati and Alamelu Maṅga."

"O Cakra! one who destroys the demons who have strayed from Dharma! O Hari Cakra! The discus that cuts apart Hiranyākśa hidden in the netherworld! Protect this world without leaving the hand of the Lord, O Cakra! the discus that moves shiningly on the streets of Veṅkaṭacala! We offer our obeisances unto you."

"Torches are seen ahead of the Hari Chariot. The bells of the Garuḍa Flag, spinning golden cakras, white umbrellas, decorations on the chariot, and the charioteer are all shining like Meru Mountain. On both sides of the Hari Chariot, the Vedās are being recited by Lord Brahmā and others and Lord Śrī Ramaṇa shines brilliantly. Apsarās are dancing and singing, and Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara is coming along the streets to fulfill the wishes of countless devotees. Our obeisances to Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara."

"At the end of Brahmotsavaṁ, the demigods like Lord Śiva, Lord Brahmā and sages, and others are exhausted. Veṅkaṭeśvara bids them farewell, saying, 'O Yama, go! O Dikpālas, go in your directions! O Nārad, Sanaka, Sanandana, go and come back again. You all have served with joy and are tired. Come again in the next Brahmotsavaṁ.'"

Kalyāṇotsavaṁ: Every day, from 12 PM to around one hour, the Kalyāṇotsavaṁ of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara is celebrated. This festival is also known as Nitya Kalyāṇam.

Annamācārya has described the wedding ceremony of Padmāvatī and Veṅkaṭeśvara in several of his kīrtanas. Below are some interpretations of those kīrtanas:

"O auspicious women! Come from all directions to witness the wedding of the Lord. Today is the auspicious moment of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and Śrī Mahālakṣmī's wedding. O demigods! The bherī is being played, the Garuḍa flag is waving. Come and witness the Lord's wedding. Today, Manmatha's father and Kamala Devi are getting married. O sages! Come and take the sandalwood. All those who recite the Vedās, come, this couple will bless you."

"Alamelu Maṅga and Veṅkaṭeśvara are eager for their wedding. Tie the basikaṁ for the couple. Offer tāmbūla in their hands. O auspicious women! Sing the sacred songs. Know the muhurta beforehand. Quickly recite the Maṅgala-ṣṭaka. Place the curtain between the bride and the groom and let them secretly look at each other. Now, remove the curtain. Unite them, tie the kaṅkaṇa (wedding band) around their wrists, and have them sit in the marriage hall. Bless Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara and Alamelu Maṅga."

"The joy and excitement of the wedding are unmatched, especially during the Tālāmbra ceremony. The shy bride, holding the tāmbūla, smiles from the side. The famous bride wears a large pearl necklace around her neck. She hesitates to reveal the name of her future husband. The bride is thrilled when she wears the maṅgalsūtra. Wearing a garland of flowers on her head, she reaches the heart of Veṅkaṭapati in his embrace."

This description beautifully captures the joyful and sacred rituals surrounding the divine wedding of Veṅkaṭeśvara and Alamelu Maṅga.

"O Apsarās! Dance and sing joyfully today. Take this tāmbūla. See the flying Garuḍa flag for the wedding of Śrī Ramaṇā! The divine duḍuṁbī(drums) are sounding. O demigods! Pay attention. The wedding of Lakṣmī Vibhū is happening. O Śrīvaiṣṇavas, take the gandhākṣata. Śrī Satī and Śrī Veṅkaṭānātha offered Tālāmbrā (a mixture of rice and turmeric powder) to each other. O pilgrims, bring your offerings!"

"Good fortune to the revered image of valor! Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who married the sixteen thousand maidens held captive by Narakasura, be blessed with good fortune. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who married Rukmiṇī, whom Śiśupāla had desired, be blessed with good fortune. Śrī Veṅkaṭagirī Śrīniḍhi, who married Śrī Mahālakṣmī during the churning of the ocean by the demigods and demons, victory and eternal good fortune to Him."

"At the right auspicious moment, Śrīpati and Śrīdevī exchanged flower garlands. The fortunate women sang wedding songs, and the wedding of Hari and Śrī was completed. Along with the sound of the divine duḍuṁbī, they wore the basikaṁ.[31] The sages recited the Maṅgala-ṣṭaka, and they both offered tāmbūla. The celestial maidens performed the āratī and Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, with Alamelumaṅga blessed everyone."

These verses eloquently depict the joyous celebration and sacred rituals of the divine wedding of Veṅkaṭeśvara

31 The adornment worn by the bride and groom on their heads on the wedding day

and Alamelumaṅga along with the blessings bestowed upon the devotees.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī: On the night of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's birthday, the festival deities of Rukmiṇī and Śrī Kṛṣṇa are brought to the Ghanṭā Maṇḍapa in the Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara temple. They are ceremonially bathed (abhiṣekam), adorned with exquisite garments and ornaments, and surrounded by curtains for the sacred ritual. During this time, verses from the Divya Prabandham are chanted.

Once the adornment (alaṅkāra) is completed, devotees are granted darśana of Rukmiṇī and Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Offerings (naivedya) are made while reciting accounts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's divine pastimes (avatāra-līlās) described in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. After the offering concludes, Rukmiṇī and Śrī Kṛṣṇa are ceremoniously taken back to the deity room of Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara.

After sunrise, the images of Rukmiṇī and Śrī Kṛṣṇa are paraded in a procession around the temple, and then offerings are made in the temple. In the afternoon, one palanquin carries Śrīdevī and Bhūdevī along with Lord Malayappa, and another palanquin carries Rukmiṇī and Śrī Kṛṣṇa in their procession.

5

Veṅkaṭācala (Tirumalā Parvata)

From the Skanda Purāṇa

There are several holy places on Veṅkaṭācala Hill. The āsramas of many sages, such as Vasiṣṭha, Kapila, Bhāradvāja, Gautama, and others, are situated here. Many demigods, such as Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Lord Gaṇeśa, Lord Kārtikeya, Lord Indra, and Lord Kubera, along with their families, reside on Veṅkaṭācala and worship Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara.

Just as among cows Kamadhenu is revered, among serpents Śeṣa, among birds Garuḍa, among worshipable deities Lord Viṣṇu, among clans the brāhmaṇa clan, among trees the Kalpavṛkṣa,[32] among holy places Gaṅgā, among light-givers the Sun, among weapons the Vajra, among metals Gold, among Vaishnavas Rudra, and among gems Kaustubha are considered supreme, in the same way, among mountains, Veṅkaṭācala is considered the most exalted.

Veṅkaṭācala is 7 yojanas (91 kilometers) long and 1 yojana (13 kilometers) high. When Veṅkaṭācala is bowed to from any direction, sins are eradicated, and the person attains Vaikuṇṭha. There are 660 million sacred places on this mountain. The meaning of Veṅkaṭācala is "the mountain that destroys sins." Veṅkaṭācala is equivalent to Vaikuṇṭha, all sacred places, and Lord Nārāyaṇa

32 The wish-fulfilling tree

Himself. In ancient times, Lord Nārāyaṇa took the form of a boar (Varāha) and resided on this very Veṅkaṭācala.

daśa-varṣais-tu yat-puṇyaṁ kriyate tu kṛte-yuge ।
tretāyām-eka-varṣeṇa tat-puṇyaṁ sādhayate nṛ-bhiḥ ॥
dvāpare pañc-māseṇā tad-dine-na kala-u yuge ।
tatphalaṁ koṭi-guṇitaṁ nimiṣe-nimiṣe nṛṇām ॥
niḥsandehaṁ bhaved evaṁ śrīnivāsa-vilokinām ।
śrī veṅkaṭeśvare deve tīrthāni sakalāny api ॥
vidyante sarva-devāś ca munayaḥ pitaras tathā ।
eka-kālaṁ dvi-kālaṁ vā tri-kālaṁ sarvadaiva vā ॥

In the Satya Yuga, the result of performing righteous deeds for ten years is attained. In the Treta Yuga, this result is achieved in just one year, in the Dvāpara Yuga in five months, and in Kali Yuga, it is obtained in just five days.

Nevertheless simply by having darśan of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara at Veṅkaṭācala, a person's piety multiplies millions of times with every passing moment.By visiting Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara at Veṅkaṭācala, there is no need to visit sacred places like Kāśī and Prayāga.

There is also no need to seek the darśan of demigods like Lord Indra, Lord Brahmā, and Lord Śiva, because all of them, along with their families, reside in Veṅkaṭācala and serve Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. (Skanda Purāṇa, Part 2, Veṅkaṭācala Māhātmya, Chapter 18, Verses 3-6)

When ascending Veṅkaṭācala, one should pray in this manner: "O Suvarṇa Parvata! The supreme mountain among mountains! The mountain worshiped

by the demigods! I am placing my feet upon you to have darśana of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, who is situated on your peak. Please forgive me."

The Story of Anjanādri

On the banks of the Tuṅgabhadrā River, there lived a couple named Keśarī and Añjanā Devī. They had no children, and so Añjanā Devī was performing penance to be blessed with a son. One day, Matanga Muni asked Añjanā Devī about the reason for her penance, to which she replied:

"My father, Keśarī, who was a demon, performed austerities to Lord Śiva due to the lack of offspring. Lord Śiva, after granting darśan, told him, "Due to the sins of your previous birth, you are unable to have children. However, as a result of the penance you performed for me, you will have a daughter, and from her, a son will be born whose fame will spread across the fourteen realms." It was by the grace of Lord Śiva that I was born.

The monkey, Keśarī, came to my father, Keśarī, and expressed his desire to marry me. My father agreed, and our marriage was solemnized. As a wedding gift, my father gave a crore of cows, a hundred thousand elephants, millions of chariots, horses, many jewels, gems, and maidservants. O great sage! I came to Kiṣkindhā with my husband, Keśarī. Despite many years of marriage, I still did not have children. I performed many vows, yajñas, and donations for the attainment of offspring, but received no result. Therefore, I am now performing austerities to obtain a child.

Matanga Muni told Añjanā Devī, "Go to Veṅkaṭācala, bathe in Swami Puṣkariṇī and Ākāśagaṅgā Tīrtha,

drink their sacred water, and perform austerities there to please god of wind–Vāyu Deva. Your desire will be fulfilled." Añjanā Devī followed Matanga Muni's instructions and began her penance at Ākāśagaṅgā Tīrtha. Vāyu Deva appeared before her and said, "Because of me, you will have a son. His fame will spread across the fourteen realms." By the blessing of Vāyu Deva, Añjanā Devī gave birth to Hanumān. Since Añjanā Devī performed penance at Veṅkaṭācala, this mountain came to be known as Anjanādri.

The Story of King Daśaratha from the Varāha Purāṇa

Due to the lack of offspring, King Daśaratha inquired with Vasiṣṭha Muni about a remedy for having children. Vasiṣṭha Muni suggested that he perform penance for Lord Nārāyaṇa at Veṅkaṭācala. Following Vasiṣṭha Muni's guidance, King Daśaratha bathed in Swami Puṣkariṇī and performed penance for Lord Nārāyaṇa. Lord Nārāyaṇa appeared before him and asked him to request a boon.

After circumambulating and offering obeisances to Lord Nārāyaṇa, King Daśaratha praised Him and asked for the boon of having a son. Lord Nārāyaṇa replied, "Due to the sinful actions from your previous birth, you have no children."

King Daśaratha then said to Narayana, "Where the sun resides, how can there be darkness? Similarly, after having Your darśan, how can my sins remain with me?" Lord Nārāyaṇa was pleased by the words of King Daśaratha and said, "Having seen me and glorifying me

with four verses, I will incarnate as your four sons and will destroy Rāvaṇa and other demons."

Śrī Rāma

While in exile, along with Sītā Devī and Lakṣmaṇa, Rāvaṇāsura abducted Sītā and took her to Laṅkā. Śrī Rāma along with the monkeys went to Veṅkaṭācala in search of Sītā and bathed in various tīrthas. At that time, Aṅjanā Devī arrived and served as a guest to Śrī Rāma. All the Ṛṣis residing on Veṅkaṭācala also served Śrī Rāma as a guest.

Vṛṣabhācala

In Kṛta-yuga, an asura named Vṛṣabhāsura defeated the demigods and began to harass the brāhmaṇas and sages. The brāhmaṇas, ṛṣis, and demigods prayed to Lord Nārāyaṇa for protection from Vṛṣabhāsura. As per the desire of the demigods, Lord Nārāyaṇa fought Vṛṣabhāsura on Veṅkaṭācala (also known as Vaikuṇṭha Parvata) and wielded the Sudarśana Cakra. At that moment, Vṛṣabhāsura asked Lord Nārāyaṇa, "O Nārāyaṇa! I have heard that the demons whom You have slain attained liberation. Please grant me liberation and name this mountain Vṛṣabhācala." Lord Nārāyaṇa fulfilled his wish, killed Vṛṣabhāsura, and granted him liberation.

Śeṣādrī

Once, Lord Nārāyaṇa told Ādi-Śeṣa, "If you become a mountain on earth, I will reside on you." Ādi-Śeṣa agreed and became a mountain on the banks of the Suvarṇamukhārī river. On this mountain, Lord Nārāyaṇa manifested as Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. Therefore,

this mountain is called Śeṣādrī.

From Bhaviṣyottara Purāṇa

Śeṣādrī

In Dvāpara Yuga, once Lord Nārāyaṇa appointed Ādi-Śeṣa as the doorkeeper and was strolling with Lakṣmī Devī. At that time, Vāyu Deva came to have the darśana of Lord Nārāyaṇa. Ādi-Śeṣa, showing a golden staff, stopped Vāyu Devatā from entering. Wind-god Vāyu said, "O fool! Why are you stopping me? I have an important task with Lord Nārāyaṇa, let me go in quickly!" Ādi-Śeṣa replied, "I only follow Lord Nārāyaṇa's command, not anyone else's. Therefore, I will not let you enter."

Vāyu Deva said to Ādi-Śeṣa, "O fool! Do you not remember that Jay and Vijay, the doorkeepers, were cursed by the sages because of their arrogance and became demons like Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarṇa? Have you forgotten that?"

Ādi-Śeṣa replied, somewhat angrily, "You are making a big talk! Don't you fear death? All living beings fail to perceive death standing nearby. You, too, are one among them. No one can match me in strength, knowledge, or detachment. I always reside in the deity room of Lord Nārāyaṇa, and because of that, I am dearest to Nārāyaṇa."

The god of wind Vāyu Deva, upon hearing these words replied, "A cat wandering in the house is not equal to an elephant roaming outside! A servant sitting on a bed adorned with jewels, massaging the king's feet, does not become the king's son. Similarly, by merely

staying near Lord Nārāyaṇa, you cannot be as dear to Him as I am."

Thus, a verbal battle ensued between Vāyu Deva and Ādi-Śeṣa. At that moment, Lord Nārāyaṇa appeared. Upon seeing Lord Nārāyaṇa, both Ādi-Śeṣa and Vāyu Deva bowed down. Then, Ādi-Śeṣa narrated the entire incident to Lord Nārāyaṇa. Lord Nārāyaṇa said, "You both should test your powers."

He instructed, "Ādi-Śeṣa, take hold of the mountain Ānanda-Ādri (son of Meru). If Vāyu can shake it, then he will be stronger, and if he cannot, then you will be stronger."

Both agreed to this proposal, and all the demigods gathered to witness it. Ādi-Śeṣa wrapped himself around the Ānanda-Ādri mountain. Vāyu Deva blew the wind with great force, but neither the mountain nor Ādi-Śeṣa could be moved. The creatures were suffering from the immense pressure.

The demigods prayed to Vāyu Deva to give up his anger and protect all living beings, but he did not listen. Then, the demigods prayed to Ādi-Śeṣa, asking him to give up his anger and protect all the living beings.

Ādi-Śeṣa, upon hearing the plea of demigods, released his hold. Due to the force of the wind, the Ānanda-Ādri mountain along with Ādi-Śeṣa fell on the banks of the Suvarṇamukhārī river. Vāyu Deva, realizing his mistake, sought forgiveness from Ādi-Śeṣa. This Ānanda-Ādri mountain had fallen because of Ādi-Śeṣa, and since the mountain is part of Ādi-Śeṣa, it is called Śeṣādrī.

The Story of Veṅkaṭācal

In Kali Yuga, near Tirupati, in the town of Kālahasti, there lived a brāhmaṇa named Mādhava. One day, Mādhava desired to have sexual relations with his wife Candralekhā, during the day. However, Candralekhā advised him, saying, "Only animals and birds engage in such activities during the day. For humans, it is both unrighteous and sinful."

Thus, she stopped Mādhava from pursuing his desires. Later, Mādhava went to the forest to gather fruits and roots. There, he encountered a courtesan and asked her to fulfill his desires. The courtesan replied, "You are a brāhmaṇa. Engaging in such acts will corrupt your lineage and make you a partaker of sin."

But Mādhava, driven by his desires, forcibly committed the act with her. The courtesan said, "You have fallen from your brāhmaṇa lineage, so now stay with me, drink wine, and eat meat." Mādhava agreed, and he spent his life drinking alcohol and eating meat with the courtesan.

After twelve years, the courtesan passed away. Mādhava could not bear her death and became mad, wandering like a lunatic. Some time later, a few kings were traveling to the Varāha region (Veṅkaṭācal). Mādhava also joined them. When they reached Vaikuṇṭācal, Mādhava's sins were washed away. Hence, this mountain was called Veṅkaṭācal—where Veṅkaṭā means one who destroys sins.

The Story of Balarama from the Bhāgavatam

The battle between the Pandavas and Kauravas was destined to take place at Kurukshetra. Both the

Kauravas and Pandavas came to Balarama seeking his assistance. However, Balarama replied, "Both of you are equal to me, hence I cannot help anyone in this battle." Upon hearing that Śrī Kṛṣṇa had decided to assist the Pandavas, Balarama chose to leave Dwarka and embark on a pilgrimage.

He visited several holy places, including Kauśikī, Saryu, Triveni, Gautami, Gandaki, Vipasha, Śona, Godavari, Pampā, Bhima, Suvarṇamukhārī, and Veṅkaṭācal, where he bathed in the sacred waters, had the darśana of the deities, and donated cows and gold to the brāhmaṇas.

The Praise of Tirumalā by Annamācārya

Annamācārya composed several hymns praising the glory of Tirumalā. One of his hymns expresses:

"The Tirumalā Mountain is like the serpent Śeṣanāga with ten thousand hoods. It appears miraculous even to Lord Brahmā and other demigods. This is an excellent place for the residence of Rishis and demigods. Veṅkaṭāgiri, with golden peaks, is worthy of reverence. Wherever you look in the Tirumalā region, there are holy pilgrimage sites. Veṅkaṭāgiri grants liberation. The Tirumalā Mountain, the abode of Veṅkaṭeśvara, is like Vaikuṇṭha. The paths of Veṅkaṭādri are lined with the hermitages of sages. Everywhere you see, there is worship happening. Wish-fulfilling trees are found everywhere, and devotees on their way to have darśana of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara are seen everywhere."

The praise of the Veṅkaṭācal mountain was not only sung by Annamācārya, but also by numerous other

ācāryas. You can find a description of Āḻvār's praises in the eighth chapter titled "Āḻvār's Praise."

(Note: From Śrīnīvāsa Maṅgāpuram to Tirumalā, there are 2400 steps, and from Alipiri, 3550 steps.)

6

Sacred Places at Tirumalā

In Tirumalā and Tirupati, almost all temples remain open from 5:00 AM to 8:30 PM, except during the time of offerings.

Swami Puṣkariṇī's Glory

Near the Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara temple and in front of the Lord Varāha temple lies a pond called Swami Puṣkariṇī. The expanse of Swami Puṣkariṇī is one and a half acres. On the day of Vaikuṇṭha Ekādaśī, all the sacred waters from various tīrthas (holy places) merge into this Puṣkariṇī, which is why it is known as 'Mukkoṭi Tīrtha.' Among all the Puṣkariṇīs, this is the most prominent, hence it is also referred to as 'Swami Puṣkariṇī.'

Sarasvatī Devī from the Lord Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa

Lord Brahmā's consort, Sarasvatī Devī, incarnated as the Sarasvatī River with the desire to become a great river. Once, sage Pulastya came to the banks of the Sarasvatī River and began meditating. Sarasvatī Devī did not offer him any worship, as he was like a son to her. Considering this act of not being worshipped as an insult, sage Pulastya cursed Sarasvatī Devī, saying, "The glory you wished for by incarnating as a river will not be fulfilled, because the Ganga River, which originates from Lord Viṣṇu's feet, will be more famous than you."

After receiving this curse, Sarasvatī Devī cursed sage Pulastya, saying, "Since you have cursed me without reason, all your descendants will become demons." However, later, sage Pulastya realized his mistake and sought forgiveness from Sarasvatī Devī. She then said, "In your lineage, a devotee of Lord Viṣṇu named Vibhīṣaṇa will be born, who will enhance your fame."

Desiring to become the most prominent river among all rivers, Sarasvatī Devī meditated upon Lord Nārāyaṇa. Lord Nārāyaṇa appeared and said, "I will not disregard Pulastya Muni's curse, but I cannot deny your wish either. The curse of Pulastya Muni applies to rivers, not to tīrthas (holy places). Therefore, you should incarnate as a tīrtha in Veṅkaṭācala in the form of Puṣkariṇī. In Kali Yuga, I will appear there as Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. 33 crore 50 lakh tīrthas will come to bathe in your waters and praise you. In this way, you will become renowned as the foremost of all tīrthas." Following Lord Nārāyaṇa's instructions, Sarasvatī Devī incarnated as a tīrtha, which came to be known as Swami Puṣkariṇī.'

The Story of Kaśyapa from the Skanda Purāṇa

The descendant of the Pāṇḍavas, King Parīkṣit, was ruling his kingdom righteously. One day, while hunting, he chased a deer and arrived at the āśrama of Śāmīka Muni. King Parīkṣit offered his respects to Śāmīka Muni and asked, "O Lord! Has the deer passed by here?" Śāmīka Muni was absorbed in meditation and did not respond. King Parīkṣit, who was hungry and thirsty, became disappointed at the lack of an answer and, in his frustration, picked up a dead serpent nearby and draped it around Śāmīka Muni's neck before leaving.

When Śāmīka Muni's son, Śṛṅgi, learned of this, he cursed King Parīkṣit, saying, "In seven days, you will die from the bite of a serpent named Takṣaka."

Upon hearing this, Kaśyapa[33], a disciple of Dhanvantari, set out to save King Parīkṣit. Takṣaka learned of Kaśyapa's efforts and said to him, "The wealth that King Parīkṣit would offer, I will give it to you," and sent him back with riches. After this, Takṣaka struck King Parīkṣit and killed him.

Because Kaśyapa had failed to save King Parīkṣit, his relatives, the brāhmaṇas, and friends blamed him. Unable to bear the blame, Kaśyapa went to Śākalya Muni and told him everything. Śākalya Muni said, "You had the power to save the great devotee of Kṛṣṇa and the righteous King Parīkṣit, yet you did not. A physician must treat a patient until death and try to save them. If the physician does not treat the patient due to greed, anger, or envy, it is as sinful as the killing of a brāhmaṇa. You had the power to save King Parīkṣit, but due to greed for wealth, you failed, and thus you have incurred sin."

Kaśyapa, seeking a remedy for his sin, asked what he should do. Śākalya Muni instructed, "Go to the banks of the Suvarṇamukhārī River, at the foot of the Veṅkaṭācala mountain, and bathe in Swami Puṣkariṇī. There, worship Lord Varāha and Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, and your sin will be erased." Kaśyapa followed this advice, bathed in Swami Puṣkariṇī, and was freed from his sin.

The Story of Dharmagupta

King Nanda of the Candravaṃśa dynasty entrusted his son, Dharmagupta, with the kingdom and went to

33 He is a different person from Lord Brahmā's son Kaśyapa.

the forest for meditation. One day, Dharmagupta went hunting in the forest. As it became dark, he climbed a tree for safety. On that very tree, there was a bear. Just as Dharmagupta was about to climb down the tree to save himself, a lion appeared below. Terrified, the bear spoke to Dharmagupta, saying, "Do not fear, I will not harm you. Instead, I will protect you." The bear reassured Dharmagupta, "You may rest on my thigh until midnight, and then I will rest on your thigh."

Dharmagupta accepted this offer and fell asleep. At that moment, the lion spoke to the bear, "This king is our enemy. If you throw him down, I will eat him and leave." The bear replied, "Betraying a friend brings a sin that cannot be erased even by ten thousand yajñas. I will not betray the king."

After a while, when King Dharmagupta woke up, he found the bear resting on his thigh. The lion then spoke to Dharmagupta, saying, "If you push him down, I will eat him and leave you unharmed." Believing the lion's words, the king threw the bear down. However, the bear grabbed a branch of the tree and saved itself, saying to the king, "O King! I am Dhyananīṣṭha, a brāhmaṇa of the Bhṛgu lineage. I take different forms at my will. You have betrayed me, and for this, I curse you to become mad."

Then the bear spoke to the lion, saying, "O lion, you were a yakṣa in your previous life." One day, you and your wife wandered naked through the forest and entered the āśrama of sage Gautama. The sage saw you and said, 'Though a yakṣa, you wander naked like an animal.' Thus, he cursed you. And it was through his curse that you became a lion."

Upon hearing this, the lion was freed from the curse and transformed back into his original yakṣa form, he said to the bear, "You have spoken the truth." After the sage cursed me, I asked him how I could be freed from the curse. The sage told me that when a bear narrates the story of my past life, my curse will be lifted. By your grace, my curse is lifted today." Saying this, the yakṣa bowed to the bear and returned to his realm.

Mad with distress, King Dharmagupta wandered aimlessly in his kingdom. Concerned by his condition, the ministers brought Dharmagupta to the forest and presented him to his father, King Nanda. They told Nanda, "Your son Dharmagupta has lost his sanity." King Nanda, with his son in tow, went to sage Jaimini and asked about the cause of Dharmagupta's madness. Sage Jaimini, grasping the situation, explained that Dharmagupta's betrayal of the bear had brought about the curse.

King Nanda asked, "O sage, kindly tell me what can cure my son's sin and lift his curse." Sage Jaimini replied, "By bathing in the Swami Puṣkariṇī tīrtha, nestled on the Veṅkaṭācala mountain, the holy abode of Lord Viṣṇu, your son's sins and his curse will be destroyed." Following the sage's advice, King Nanda took Dharmagupta to Swami Puṣkariṇī and had him bathe there. Upon bathing, Dharmagupta was cleansed of his sins and was freed from the curse.

The Story of Sumati

In the land of Maharashtra, there lived a brāhmaṇa named Sumati, who, influenced by bad company, lived

with courtesans and was involved in sinful activities like drinking and theft. Driven by greed one day, Sumati attempted to steal but tragically killed a brāhmaṇa in the process. As a result of this heinous act, Sumati incurred the great sin of brāhmaṇaicide.

Overcome with remorse for his actions, Sumati confided in his father, Yajñadeva, about his pitiable state. Yajñadeva took his son to sage Durvāsā and prayed to him to help free Sumati from his sins. Sage Durvāsā advised, "Take Sumati to the sacred Swami Puṣkariṇī tīrtha on the Veṅkaṭācala mountain and have him bathe there."

Following the instructions of the sage, Yajñadeva brought Sumati to Swami Puṣkariṇī for a purifying bath. Upon bathing in the sacred waters, Sumati was absolved of the great sin of brāhmaṇaicide.

The Story of Lord Varāha's temple
(from the Bhavishyottara Purāṇa)

Following the victory over the demon Hiraṇyākṣa, Lord Varāha received prayers from the sages, "O Lord, protector of the Earth, grant us your darśana (divine vision) and continue to safeguard us." Lord Varāha answered, "Your wish shall be granted," and chose to dwell on the sacred Veṅkaṭācala mountain, sanctifying it with his divine presence.

After sage Bhṛgu tested Lord Nārayāṇa, Goddess Lakṣmī, heartbroken by the separation from her husband, departed from Vaikuṇṭha. Unable to bear the emptiness of Vaikuṇṭha without Lakṣmī, Lord Nārayāṇa

journeyed to Veṅkaṭācala, seeking the darśana of Lord Varāha. Lord Varāha inquired, "O Nārayāṇa, what brings you to Veṅkaṭācala?" Lord Nārayāṇa narrated the entire incident and requested permission to reside on Veṅkaṭācala until the end of the Kali Yuga.

Lord Varāha said, "If you offer the appropriate tribute - wealth in the form of Lakṣmī - I shall grant you a place." Lord Nārayāṇa replied, "At this moment, I do not possess Goddess Lakṣmī and thus cannot offer wealth as tribute." However, in the coming Kali Yuga, the devotees seeking my darśana will first offer their devotion at your temple. Before my worship, they will perform abhiṣeka (ritual bathing), present naivedya (offerings), and conduct āratī in your honor. This devotion shall be my offering of wealth to you."

Lord Varāha agreed to this proposal and granted Lord Nārayāṇa 100 gajās (yards) of land. (Therefore, even today, devotees first offer darśana to Lord Varāha before proceeding to worship Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. Lord Varāha is the recipient of naivedya, pūjā, and āratī before Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara.)

From the Skanda Purāṇa

One day, Vasū, a devotee of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara who lived on the Veṅkaṭācala mountain, approached Toṇḍamāna, the ruler of Nārayāṇapura, and said: "O King! Once, when a white varāha (wild boar) was destroying the rice crops, I attempted to kill it. The varāha fled into a cave near the Puṣkariṇī. As I began digging at the cave's entrance, I suddenly lost consciousness and collapsed. Seeing my condition, my son prayed to Lord

Veṅkaṭeśvara. At that moment, the varāha entered my body and spoke to my son: 'O Nishādārāja! deliver this message to king Toṇḍamāna: Anoint that cave with the milk of a black cow, and a sacred stone will emerge. From this stone, a deity of mine must be crafted, depicting me standing with the face of a varāha and the Goddess Bhūdevī seated on my left thigh.' Upon regaining my consciousness, my son recounted to me everything the varāha had conveyed."

Toṇḍamāna assured Vasū, "I will carry out everything as instructed." Turning to his minister, he commanded, "Prepare our black cows and take them to the Veṅkaṭācala mountain." Toṇḍamāna told this entire story to the queens in his inner quarters and went to sleep. That night, Toṇḍamāna dreamt of a hidden tunnel connecting his inner quarters to Swami Puṣkariṇī. To his astonishment, upon waking, he discovered that the tunnel truly existed. Toṇḍamāna traveled through the tunnel and reached Swami Puṣkariṇī. Obeying Lord Varāha's divine instructions, Toṇḍamāna anointed the cave with the sacred milk of the black cows. Miraculously, a magnificent black stone emerged from within.

From the sacred stone, a deity of Lord Varāha, accompanied by Bhūdevī, was skillfully crafted. A grand temple was erected to house the deity, and the deity was consecrated amidst an elaborate and joyous ceremony."

In the 1900s, Prayāgdās, the head priest of the Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara temple, undertook the renovation of the neglected and dilapidated Lord Varāha temple, restoring it to its former glory.

Today, the Lord Varāha temple houses the original deity of Lord Varāha with Goddess Bhūdevī, along with the revered deities of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and the sacred Śālāgrāma śilā.

The Story of the Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara temple
(From the Bhaviṣyottara Purāṇa)

Following His divine marriage to Padmāvatī Devī, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara chose to reside for some time at the sacred āśrama of Agastya Muni. One day, Toṇḍamāna came to pay his respects to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. The Lord warmly embraced him and gently inquired about the purpose of his visit. Toṇḍamāna replied with deep reverence, "O Lord, nothing in this world is more precious to me than your divine darśana. O Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, you are the supreme Lord of yogis, the creator and sustainer of the universe. It is by your will that Lord Brahmā takes his seat, and it is you who eternally consort with Lakṣmī Devī."

With heartfelt devotion, he glorified Lord in numerous ways and prayed earnestly, "May my life find its highest purpose and fulfillment through unwavering service to you."

Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara proclaimed, "O King, it is my divine wish to establish a magnificent temple on Veṅkaṭācala. The temple must include three prākāras (circumambulatory paths), two majestic gopurams (towered gateways), seven intricately carved doors, a chamber for weaving flower garlands, a spacious kitchen, a yajñaśālā (sacrificial hall), rooms for garments and oil

storage, a dining hall, and a jewelry room. Ensure it is built with unparalleled grandeur and reflects the divine majesty of its purpose."

As the temple was being constructed, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara spoke to Toṇḍamāna with divine authority, saying, "The tamarind tree at this sacred site shall be my dwelling place. The champak tree will be the sacred abode of Lakṣmī Devī. Therefore, you must not disturb or uproot these trees. Both you and the sages are to offer your worship and reverence to these divine trees."

In accordance with Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's divine instructions, Toṇḍamāna oversaw the construction of the temple with great devotion.

Toṇḍamāna also constructed the sacred temple stairs extending from Śrīnivāsa Maṅgāpuram and humbly dedicated them to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. At an auspicious moment, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, accompanied by the celestial gods, entered the temple. He lovingly placed Padmāvatī Devī on His chest, rested His left hand gracefully on His waist, and with His right hand, extended a gesture inviting all to seek refuge at His divine feet. In this divine form, He manifested as the deity, eternally present to bless His devotees.

Gollā Maṇḍap

Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya once resided for a year at the sacred Nammāḻvār temple in Kapila Tīrtha. During this period, he devoutly listened to the Rāmāyaṇa as narrated by Tirumala Nambi, completing the recital

eighteen times. During his stay, a deeply devoted woman named Toṇḍurukoṇḍi faithfully brought fresh cow's milk for Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya every day as an offering of service. As Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya prepared to return to Śrīraṅgam, he offered Toṇḍurukoṇḍi money in gratitude for her devoted service. However, she humbly replied, "O Lord, I seek no monetary reward. Instead, I humbly request that you grant me liberation (Mukti)."

Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya gently replied, "The divine power to grant liberation lies solely with Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. You must therefore direct your prayers to Him."

Toṇḍurukoṇḍi earnestly said, "O Lord, I am unsure if Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara will heed my humble prayers. I beseech you to write a letter on my behalf to the Lord."

Impressed by her devotion, Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya wrote a letter to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara: "O Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara! This devotee has served me daily by bringing milk. In return, she asks for liberation. Please grant her liberation."

He gave the letter to Toṇḍurukoṇḍi, who then went to Tirumalā. After bathing in Swami Puṣkariṇī, she had the darśana of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. She placed the letter written by Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya at Lord's feet, then exited the temple and proceeded to the place where she gave up her body. Afterward, she entered a pyre made of wood and sacrificed her life in the flames.

Pleased by Toṇḍurukoṇḍi's devotion and surrender, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara took her to Vaikuṇṭha in the

Puṣpaka Vimāna. A maṇḍapa (pavilion) was built at the place where Toṇḍurukoṇḍi left her body, known as the 'Gollā maṇḍapam,' which remains an important site for devotees. It is located in front of the first gopuram of the temple.

Tirumala Nambi temple (Residence)

One of the prominent saints of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition, Yāmunācārya, sent his disciple, Tirumala Nambi, to serve Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. Following his guru's instructions, Tirumala Nambi traveled to Tirumalā, where he dedicated his life to the service of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara.

In his final moments, he prayed to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, saying, "O My Lord! I have served you as per the orders of my guru, Yāmunācārya. Now, I am about to depart from this body. If I have made any mistake in my service, I humbly ask for your forgiveness."

Tirumala Nambi then addressed the devotees present, saying, "If I have committed any offense or injustice towards any of you, I humbly seek your forgiveness." After saying this, he left his body.

To preserve his memory, the devotees established a deity of him at his residence, which is situated to the right of the Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara temple. This place is known as the "Tirumala Nambi temple."

Anantācārya Vṛndāvan (Samādhi)

Once, Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya said to his disciples, "Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara has a great love for flowers. This

is something that Nammāḻvār had mentioned in one of his hymns. Is there anyone among you who would go to Tirumalā to offer flowers in Lord's service?"

Anantācārya responded, "Guruji, I will go to Tirumalā and offer flowers in Lord's service." Pleased with Anantācārya's devotion, Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya granted him permission to undertake the task.

Anantācārya then traveled to Tirumalā and set up a hut behind the Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara temple. He dug a well and planted a beautiful garden of Tulasi and various flowers, all meant for offering to Lord. Throughout his life, he offered flowers and Tulasi leaves to Lord as an act of service.

His samādhi (final resting place) is situated at this location, which is known as "Anantācārya Vṛndāvan."

Tarigonda Veṅgamāmbā Vṛndāvan (Samādhi)

After having five sons, Kṛṣṇayyā from Tarigonda went to Tirumalā and prayed to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, "O My Lord, bless me with a daughter." By the grace of Lord, Kṛṣṇayyā was blessed with a daughter, who was named Veṅkammā. She later became widely known as Veṅgamāmbā.

Veṅgamāmbā was married, but her husband passed away in a short time. Overcome with grief, she traveled to Tirumalā and dedicated her life to the service of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. She made a vow to create garlands of flowers and Tulasi leaves every day as an offering to Lord, and began digging a well to create a garden for the purpose.

As she was digging the well, a large rock became an obstacle. Veṅgamāmbā prayed to Goddess Gaṅgā, and by her grace, the rock split into two parts, allowing water to flow. She used this water to irrigate the garden, and every day she prepared garlands of flowers and Tulasi leaves to offer to the Lord. Even today, the well dug by Veṅgamāmbā can be seen in front of the Seva Bhavan at the Tirumalā Tirupati Devāsthānam.

In the later stages of her life, Veṅgamāmbā constructed a samādhi in the Tulasi garden near the Lord Varāha temple, where she entered into it and left her physical form behind. Her samādhi remains at that site, and devotees continue to visit with great reverence to offer their prayers.

Hāthīrām Bābājī Vṛndāvan (Samādhi)

Hāthīrām Bābājī, having obtained permission from his guru, embarked on a pilgrimage that led him to Tirumalā. Due to his spiritual fame, thousands of people started visiting him for darśan. Worried that the growing crowds might disrupt his meditation and spiritual practices, Hāthīrām Bābājī chose to relocate to a quieter place. He built the Lord Venugopāla temple along the path to Pāpanāśana Tīrtha, which lies between Gogarbha Tīrtha and Ākāśagaṅgā. There, he devoted himself to the service of Lord Venugopāla and lived in peace.

On the day before Dīpāvalī, Hāthīrām Bābājī entered Jīvit Samādhi (living samādhi), entering into eternal meditation. Near his samādhi, there stands a special Rāi tree, the leaves of which Hāthīrām Bābājī used to

consume as food during his lifetime. Even today, the Rāi tree remains at the site, and devotees visit the place to pay their respects.

The Glory of Ākāśagaṅgā Tīrtha

Tirumala Nambi, every day, would bring water from Pāpanāśana Tīrtha to perform the Abhiṣeka (ritual bathing) of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. One day, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara appeared before him in the form of a child and said, "Dādā! Dādā! I am thirsty. Kindly give me water." Tirumala Nambi replied, "This water has been brought from Pāpanāśana for the Abhiṣeka of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. If I give it to you, it will become impure. I can go back and fetch more, but it will take time. So, you may go to Pāpanāśana and drink the water there."

In response, the child went behind Tirumala Nambi and shot an arrow at the water pot, and pierced it, drinking from the pot. Distressed by this, Tirumala Nambi saw the child shoot an arrow at a mountain, and a stream of water began to flow from it. The child then said, "Dādā! Now, you need not go to Pāpanāśana for water. You may use this stream for the Abhiṣeka of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara." After speaking these words, the child disappeared.

Tirumala Nambi soon realized that the child was none other than Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara himself appearing in disguise. From that day on, he began using the water from this newly formed stream for the Abhiṣeka of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. This stream became known as Ākāśagaṅgā.

Even today, the descendants of Tirumala Nambi bring water from Ākāśagaṅgā in a silver pot, carried on an elephant, to be used in the Abhiṣeka of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. On the day when the stream of Ākāśagaṅgā first appeared, the festival deity of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara is taken to Ākāśagaṅgā, where a special festival is celebrated.

The Glory of Jābāli Tīrtha

On the banks of the Kāverī River, there lived a sinful brāhmaṇa named Durācāri, who indulged in drinking, stealing, and consorting with women of ill repute. One day, he was captured by a Rākṣasa (demon) who took control of him. The demon traveled through various lands and eventually reached Jābāli Tīrtha, situated on the Veṅkaṭācala mountain. As soon as the demon bathed in this holy place, his demonic tendencies were eradicated, and he proceeded towards Vaikuṇṭha.

Seeing this transformation, Durācāri asked the great sage Jābāli, "I am a sinful brāhmaṇa living on the banks of the Kāverī River. How have I come to be here?"

Jābāli Muni replied, "A demon summoned you and, traveling through various lands, brought you to this sacred Veṅkaṭācala mountain. The same demon bathed here, and by the power of this holy Tīrtha, was liberated from his demonic nature and ascended to Vaikuṇṭha. By bathing in this Tīrtha, you too have been freed from your sins."

Transformed by the sanctity of Jābāli Tīrtha, Durācāri stayed there for the rest of his life, constantly bathing in the holy waters and dedicating himself to the

worship of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. In the end, he attained Vaikuṇṭha.

The Glories of Various Holy Places from the Skanda Purāṇa

The Glory of Pāpanāśana Tīrtha

Bhadrmati

Bhadrmati, a brāhmaṇa with six wives and two hundred offspring, lived in extreme poverty despite his large family, and they all suffered from hunger. One day, his youngest wife told him, Swāmī, there is a sacred place called Pāpanāśana Tīrtha, located on the banks of the Suvarṇamukhārī River at the Veṅkaṭācala mountain. Narada Muni once told my father that bathing there removes sins from past lifetimes. We should all go to the Pāpanāśana Tīrtha to bathe."

Following the advice of his wife, Bhadrmati took his entire family to Pāpanāśana Tīrtha. After bathing in the sacred waters, the poverty that had plagued their lives vanished completely, and they were blessed with prosperity.

Sumati

Dṛḍhamati, a Śūdra, once approached the brāhmaṇas and requested knowledge of the Vedās.The brāhmaṇas told him, "According to the Vedic injunctions, a śūdra is not permitted to receive knowledge of the Vedās. Instead, stay here and serve us; this will be beneficial for you." However, Dṛḍhamati did not accept their advice. Undeterred, Dṛḍhamati built an āsrama in the forest where he dedicated himself to daily rituals, chanting,

sacrifices, and penance, emulating the practices of the brāhmaṇas.

One day, a brāhmaṇa named Sumati, while on a pilgrimage, arrived at Dṛḍhamati's āsrama. Dṛḍhamati hosted him and requested him to impart Vedic knowledge. Sumati agreed and taught him the Vedās. As a result of imparting Vedic knowledge to a śūdra, Sumati endured the consequences in the afterlife, experiencing hell after his death. Subsequently, he was reborn in various forms—first as animals, then as a śūdra, vaiśya, and kṣatriya. Ultimately, after undergoing these cycles of rebirth, he was born into a brāhmaṇa family, completing his journey.

When Sumati was born as a brāhmaṇa, he was troubled by a Brahmarākṣasa. Sumati confided in his father about this problem. His father took him to Agatsya Muni, who, knowing Sumati's previous life, explained, "Your son had to face the consequences of teaching a śūdra the Vedās in his past life. This Brahmarākṣasa ultimately, after undergoing these cycles of rebirth, he was born into a brāhmaṇa family, completing his journey. If your son bathes in the Pāpanāśana Tīrtha at Veṅkaṭācala, he will be freed from the sin of teaching the Vedās to a śūdra and from the torment of the Brahmarākṣasa."

Heeding Agastya Muni's advice, Sumati's father took him to the sacred Pāpanāśana Tīrtha for purification. After bathing there, Sumati was liberated from his past sins and freed from the Brahmarākṣasa's affliction.

Hātīrām Bābājī Samādhi, Jābāli Tīrtha, Ākāśagaṅgā Tīrtha, and Pāpanāśana Tīrtha are all situated about seven kilometers from Tirumalā.

The Glory of Cakra Tīrtha

A brāhmaṇa named Padmanābha was performing penance while worshipping Lord Viṣṇu n the Veṅkaṭācala Mountain. Pleased by his penance, Lord Viṣṇu appeared before him. Padmanābha prayed to the Lord for liberation. In response, Lord Viṣṇu said, "Remain steadfast in your devotion to Me and continue bathing in this sacred place, for it will purify your soul and lead you to liberation." After saying this, Lord Viṣṇu disappeared.

Padmanābha, following the Lord's command, continued his penance there. One day, a demon came to kill Padmanābha. In distress, Padmanābha began to pray to Lord Viṣṇu for protection. To protect His devotee, Lord Viṣṇu sent His Sudarśana cakra. The Sudarśana cakra appeared instantly and destroyed the demon, ensuring Padmanābha's safety.

Padmanābha praised the Sudarśana cakra. Pleased, the Sudarśana cakra spoke, "From this day forward, I shall reside in this sacred place offering my protection to you and all devotees against the wrath of demons. Because I will reside here, this sacred place will be known as Cakra Tīrtha. Anyone who bathes here will be freed from all sins." With these words, the Sudarśana cakra descended into the lake, blessing it with its divine presence.

The Story of the Demon Who Came to Kill Padmanābha

In ancient times, some sages were residing in Śrīraṅgam and were engaged in the service of

Śrīraṅganātha. One day, along with Vasiṣṭha Muni, all these sages went to bathe in the Kāverī River in the afternoon. At that moment, a Gandharva named Sundara, was bathing in the Kāverī River with his wives, carelessly neglecting modesty by remaining unclothed in the presence of others. Startled by the sight of the approaching sages, Sundara's wives quickly covered themselves, but Sundara, indifferent and arrogant, chose not to follow suit.

Observing Sundara's disregard for propriety, Vasiṣṭha Muni declared, "For failing to show modesty in our presence, you are cursed to become a demon." Distraught, Sundara's wives pleaded with Vasiṣṭha Muni, "Is there any way for our husband to be freed from this curse?" Vasiṣṭha Muni replied, "Your husband will find redemption when, as a demon, he attempts to harm the sage Padmanābha on Veṅkaṭācala Mountain. Padmanābha's prayers will summon Lord Nārāyaṇa's Sudarśana cakra, which will destroy the demon and liberate your husband from the curse."

Having recounted his tale of the curse, the Gandharva Sundara bowed respectfully to Padmanābha and the Sudarśana cakra before returning to his celestial abode.

Śrīvāri Pādālu (Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's Sacred Footprints)

When the sage Bhrigu tested Lord Nārāyaṇa, Lakṣmī Devī departed from Vaikuṇṭha in distress. Unable to remain in Vaikuṇṭha without her, Lord Nārāyaṇa

descended to Veṅkaṭācala in search of His beloved. The place where Lord Nārāyaṇa set foot on Veṅkaṭācala became sanctified by his divine footprints, now revered as Śrīvāri Pādālu. Whenever the demigods, including Lord Brahmā, visit Veṅkaṭācala Tīrtha for darśan of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, they first reach Śrīvāri Pādālu offering their reverence to these sacred footprints. Cakra Tīrtha and Śrīvāri Pādam are situated approximately six kilometers away from Tirumalā.

To facilitate pilgrimage, the Tirumalā Devāsthānam provides bus services for the devotees visiting key sacred sites, including Hāthīrām, Bābājī's Samādhi, Jābālī Tīrtha, Ākāśagaṅgā Tīrtha, Pāpanāśana Tīrtha, Cakra Tīrtha, and Śrīvāri Pādam.

Glory of Rāma-Kṛṣṇa Tīrtha

On the Veṅkaṭācala mountain, a sage named Rāma-Kṛṣṇa undertook intense penance and constructed a lake for ritual bathing. As he meditated on Lord Viṣṇu, an ant hill gradually formed over his motionless body. Disturbed by the power of the sage's penance, Indra unleashed heavy rains in an attempt to disrupt him. However, Rāma-Kṛṣṇa's meditation remained unwavering, forcing Indra to abandon his efforts. Pleased with his devotion Lord Viṣṇu appeared before the sage and said, "This lake you have created shall bear your name and become a source of purification for all who bathe in it. At the end of your earthly life, you shall attain liberation." Rāma-Kṛṣṇa Tīrtha lies five kilometers from Pāpanāśana Tīrtha, accessible only by foot. Nestled deep within a forest, Rāma-Kṛṣṇa Tīrtha becomes accessible exclusively on the auspicious

Pūrṇimā day of the Māgha month, observed typically in January and February.

Kumāradhārā Tīrtha's Glory

Once, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara wandered across the Veṅkaṭācala mountain in the guise of a child. During this time, an elderly brāhmaṇa, aged a hundred years, called out mournfully for his lost son, "Kauṇḍinya! Where are you?" In his childlike form, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara asked the old brāhmaṇa, "There is no one here. Whom are you calling?" The elderly brāhmaṇa, filled with sorrow, continued to lament, "O son! Where have you gone? How will I return to my āśrama now? How will I perform my daily rituals without you?"

Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara replied, "O brāhmaṇa! Your body has grown frail, your hair has turned white, your skin is wrinkled, and your vision dimmed. Do you still wish to live?" The brāhmaṇa responded, "I have not yet repaid my debt to the demigods, so I must live." Pleased by the brāhmaṇa's devotion, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara took his hand, led him to a sacred place, and instructed him to bathe in the water there. As soon as the elderly brāhmaṇa bathed, his youth was restored, and he became as young as before. In his child form, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara revealed His Lord Viṣṇu form and said, "Now return home and perform your daily rituals." Because of the brāhmaṇa's rejuvenation, the sacred place became renowned as Kumārdhārā Tīrtha.

Pastimes of Kumāra svāmī

During the battle between the demigods and demons, Kumārasvāmī incurred the grave sin of

Lord Brahmāhatyā (the sin of killing a brāhmaṇa) by slaying Tārakāsura. To seek redemption for this sin, Kumārasvāmī approached his father, Lord Śiva, and asked for his guidance. Lord Śiva replied, "By chanting the name of Lord Nārayāṇa, all the sins are washed away. Therefore, you should go to the sacred Veṅkaṭācala mountain, which is situated on the banks of the Suvarṇamukhārī river. There are many holy places awaiting you. Bathe in these waters and, at Kumārdhārā Tīrtha, chant the mantra 'Om Namo Venkateśhāya' while performing penance."

Obeying his father's instructions, Kumārasvāmī, the leader of the demigods' army, traveled to Veṅkaṭācala. There, he bathed at numerous holy sites and, for twelve years, performed penance at Kumārdhārā Tīrtha, chanting the mantra 'Om Namo Venkateśhāya' three times each day. Pleased by his devotion, Lord Nārayāṇa appeared before Kumārasvāmī and said, "You have performed penance in my name, trusting in your father's guidance. Now ask me for a boon."

Kumārasvāmī circumambulated Lord Nārayāṇa, offered his obeisances, and praised Him in various ways, saying, "O Lord of Veṅkaṭācala! O Lord Nārayāṇa! the one who pervades all the worlds! O Master who alleviates the suffering of Your devotees!" With a heartfelt prayer, he said, "I have incurred the sin of Lord Brahmāhatyā by slaying Tārakāsura. Please absolve me of this grave sin."

Lord Nārayāṇa replied, "Whoever visits this Veṅkaṭācala mountain will have all their sins erased. Because you have performed penance for Me, you are

now free of all sins. You will remain here and serve Me until the end of Kali Yuga." After speaking these words, Lord Nārayāṇa vanished from sight.

To reach this sacred site, one must walk six kilometers from Pāpanāśana. Nestled in the forest, this place can only be visited on the full moon day of the Māgha month, which typically falls in January or February.

Tumburu (Gona) Tīrtha's Glory

One day, while traveling through the skies, Nārada Muni and Tumburu were singing the praises of Lord Nārayāṇa, each playing their veenas. When Nārada Muni noticed Tumburu's veena, adorned with precious gems, he asked, "Tumburu, where did you acquire such a magnificent veena?" Tumburu replied, "I had praised King Prācīnabaṛhī, and, moved by my devotion, he graciously gifted me this veena." Hearing this, Nārada Muni's expression turned dark with anger, and he declared, "To praise mortals is considered a folly by the righteous. Therefore, I shall no longer be your friend. For your praise of a human, you shall be cast down to the earthly realm."

As a consequence of Nārada Muni's curse, Tumburu descended to Veṅkaṭācala, near the sacred Gona Tīrtha. Stranded in the earthly realm and unable to return to his celestial home, Tumburu devoted himself to performing intense penance for Lord Nārayāṇa, immersing himself in the holy waters of Gona Tīrtha. Moved by Tumburu's sincere devotion, Lord Nārayāṇa appeared before him and granted him the opportunity to ask for a boon.

Tumburu, with a humble heart, prayed, 'O Lord, I seek liberation from Nārada Muni's curse and wish for this sacred Gona Tīrtha to bear my name.' Pleased with his devotion, Nārayāṇa granted his wish and, with a divine smile, disappeared. Henceforth, the holy waters of Gona Tīrtha came to be known as Tumburu Tīrtha.

Tumburu Tīrtha lies six kilometers from Pāpanāśana, accessible by foot. Nestled deep within the forest, it can only be visited on the full moon day of the Māgha month, which typically occurs in January or February.

Glory of Pāṇḍava Tīrtha

During their period of exile, the Pāṇḍavas, following the divine will of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, spent a year on the sacred Veṅkaṭācala mountain. The holy pool where the Pāṇḍavas bathed has since become renowned as Pāṇḍava Tīrtha. This revered site is located just two kilometers away from the Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara temple and is accessible by road.

In addition to the tīrthas already mentioned above in Tirumalā, the region is home to several other highly revered and sacred tīrthas. Some of these are given on the next page.

Iṣṭa Siddhi
Karma Siddhi
Vaṭa
Audumbara
Garuḍa
Gandharva
Kubja
Daśa Prācetas
Śeṣa
Vāsuki
Devavardhana
Karmakāṇḍa
Kṛṣṇa
Ṛṇavimocana
Parjanya
Megha
Saṅkarṣaṇa
Vāsudeva
Nārayāṇa
Yakṣa
Kāla
Gomukha
Pradyumna
Aniruddha

Pitṛ
Ārṣeya
Vaiśvadeva
Asthi
Āñjaneya
Śuddhodaka
Aṣṭabhairava
Bilva
Viṣṇu
Sarva
Śārabha
Brahma
Indra
Phalguni
Bhāradvāja
Ākāśagaṅgā
Meha
Varuṇa
Sārasvata
Kumārika
Śaka
Aṅga
Ṛṣyaśṛṅga
Aṣṭādaśa

Daśāvatāra
Halāyudha
Saptarṣi
Gajakona
Viṣvakṣena
Vāyu
Śilāṭorana
Vajra
Pañcāyudha
Halāyudha
Nṛsiṃha
Kaśyapa
Manmatha
Agni
Gautama
Daiva
Devala
Viśvāmitra
Bhārgava
Bhairava
Durārohaṇa
Aṣṭāvakra
Kṣetrapāla Śilā

7

Sacred places in Tīrupati

Lord Govindarāja temple

According to ancient scripture, sage Kanva performed intense penance for Lord Nārāyaṇa on the banks of the Kāverī River. Pleased with his devotion, Lord Nārāyaṇa appeared before him and asked the sage to request a boon. With humility, the sage prayed that the Lord would remain in the area and grant darśan to His devotees. In response, Lord Nārāyaṇa incarnated as Lord Govindarāja.

In Chidambaram, Tamil Nādu, there is a revered temple dedicated to Lord Śiva, worshipped as Lord Natarāja. Within this temple, the deity of Lord Govindarāja was installed. However, a time came when King Kulottunga, a devoted worshipper of Lord Śiva, ascended the throne. He ordered his minister, "Since Lord Viṣṇu resides in the ocean, the deity of Govindarāja, placed in the Natarāja temple, should be cast into the sea."

The minister, unsure of how to proceed with the king's directive, shared it with the soldiers. They began to take the deity of Lord Govindarāja toward the sea. At this moment, the devotees of Lord Govindarāja intervened, explaining the concepts of sin and virtue. They persuaded the soldiers to stop and, with reverence, took the deity to Tīrupati, where they informed Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya about the events that had unfolded.

In 1130, Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya constructed a new temple near the Pārthasārathi temple in Tīrupati and installed the deity of Lord Govindarāja. He organized the worship, offerings (naivedya), and festivals for Lord Govindarāja, following the same practices he had established for Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. According to the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition, the temple of Lord Govindarāja is counted among the 108 Divya Deśams, or holy places.

The ancient holy name of Tīrupati was Śrīpadapuram. After Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya installed Lord Govindarāja's deity, the town's name was changed to Tīrupati. "Tiru" refers to Śrī, the goddess Lakṣmī, and "Pati" means husband. Thus, Tīrupati translates to "the husband of Lakṣmī Devi."

Annamācārya, in his kīrtanas, extols Lord Govindarāja in many ways, some of which are as follows:

"In the region of Tīrupati, the form of Lord Govindarāja mirrors that of Vatapatraśāyī. At His feet, Śrīdevī and Bhūdevī reside. In His nābhi-lotus, Lord Brahmā sits, while He reclines on Ādiśeṣa, showering His grace upon the devotees. With conch and discus in two hands, a lotus in the third, and resting the fourth hand under His head, He is reclining."

"Did You rest in this way as a child in Gokula, drinking milk? Did You sleep in a swing while the gopīs sang lullabies to You? Did You rest like this at Kubjā's house in Mathurā or converse with Satyabhāmā in Dwārakā? You who found pillows in the hearts of Your sixteen thousand wives, now rest in Tīrupati with Śrīdevī and Bhūdevī."

"Have You grown weary from playing with the gopīs or grazing the cows in Vṛndāvana? Did You tire after playing with the gopabālakas or lifting the Govardhana hill? The reason You rest here in the presence of Lord Govindarāja remains a mystery. Meanwhile, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, standing in Tirumalā, grants darśan while resting in Tīrupati."

"Those who take refuge in Lord Govindarāja find protection. Serve Govinda, the husband of Bhūdevī and Lakṣmīdevī."

"Lord Govindarāja, in Nandavṛja, lifted the Govardhana hill on His little finger to protect the cows and gopīs from the torrential rain sent by Indra. This same Govindarāja, beloved of many cowherd girls, later came to Mathurā and killed Kaṃsa, freeing His parents, Devakī and Vasudeva, from prison."

"When the cruel serpent Kālia poisoned the Yamunā River, threatening all life, Govinda defeated him and expelled him, ensuring the safety of the people. With His powerful Sudarśana cakra, He destroyed demons like Śiśupāla. To fulfill the wishes of His Guru, Śāndīpani, and His mother, Devakī, He crossed the ocean and revived their deceased sons."

Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya, "Upon entering the first gopuram of this Pārthasārathi temple, you will encounter several sacred shrines, including those of Vedānta Deśika, Maṇwāl Mahāmuni, Varavaramuni, Āḻvārs, Lord Raṅganātha, Sītā-Rāma-Lakṣmaṇa, Lakṣmīdevī, Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya, Anantācārya, Tīrummalā Nambi, Godādevī, Kalyāṇa Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, and Lord

Narasiṁha Deva. The temples of Godādevī and Tīrumalā Nambi were established by Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya, while the Pārthasārathi temple itself was founded by his disciples." This Lord Govindarāja temple is situated half a kilometer from the Tīrupati railway station.

Lord Kodaṇḍarāma temple

According to the Sthala Purāṇa about the Lord Kodaṇḍarāma temple: After slaying Rāvaṇa, Śrī Rāma, on His journey back to Ayodhyā, paused in Tīrupati and bathed in the Swami Puṣkariṇī lake which is located in Tirumalā. During this time, Jāmbavān, at the resting place of Śrī Rāma in Tīrupati, installed and began worshipping deities of Sītā, Śrī Rāma, and Lakṣmaṇa. Jāmbavān placed Sītā Devī to the right of Śrī Rāma, which is why even today, Sītā Devī is positioned to the right of Śrī Rāma, and Lakṣmaṇa to His left. In front of the temple, a deity of Garuḍa is also installed. In the Dvāpara Yuga, King Janamejaya renovated this temple and performed the worship for Śrī Rāma.

Annamācārya composed several kīrtanas in praise of Lord Kodaṇḍarāma, one of which expresses the following sentiment:

"Śrī Rāma, despite being the son of King Daśaratha, is the liberating Lord Narāyaṇa. Śrī rāma, who appeared in the form of an ordinary human being, is none other than Śrī Hari, the one who broke the bow. Though a king, He is the great soul who transformed Ahalyā, who had turned into stone due to her curse, with the dust of His feet. Despite dwelling as an ordinary human, Śrī Rāma performed remarkable deeds. Take darśan of such Śrī Rāma."

"Śrī Rāma, in this world, made sage Vasiṣṭha His Guru in the form of an ordinary human. He granted liberation to Jatāyu. For Sītā Devī, He built a bridge over the ocean with the help of the monkeys and defeated Rāvaṇa. Lord Narāyaṇa instructed the demigods to take birth as monkeys to annihilate the demons. Yet, Lord Narāyaṇa (Śrī Rāma) made Vibhīṣaṇa, a demon, the king of Laṅkā. Now, that same Śrī Rāma has come to reside in Veṅkaṭācala. Take darśan of such Śrī Rāma."

In the disciple tradition of Hāthīrām Bābājī, Mahant Dharmadāsu presented silver crowns for Sītā, Śrī Rāma, and Lakṣmaṇa, as well as a silver bow for Śrī Rāma, and adorned the flag pole with gold. Mahant Bhagavān Dāsu created several golden ornaments for Sītā, Śrī Rāma, and Lakṣmaṇa, while Mahant Prayāg Dāsu beautified the temple premises with his artistic decorations. Although Jāmbavānth did not install the deity of Hanumān, in the main deity room, devotees later constructed a temple for Hanumān outside the first gopuram, where they installed His deity. On Hanumān Jayantī, Śrī Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa visit the Hanumān temple to bless Him. There, they perform pūjā and accept offerings.

Annamācārya composed a kīrtana in praise of Hanumān, which expresses the following:

"O Hanumān, of great valor! Your form, with your tail curled as you march forward, is truly astonishing. You vanquish demons and comfort Sītā Devī by delivering Śrī Rāma's ring to her. You grant fearlessness to your devotees. By residing in Tīrupati, you bestow your compassionate gaze upon the devotees who come to serve Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara." The Lord Kodaṇḍarāma temple

is located half a kilometer from the Lord Govindarāja temple and one kilometer from the railway station.

Kapila Tīrtha

From the Varāha Purāṇa:

(Once, Lord Shiva visited Lord Venkateswara, worshipped Him, and praised Him. He then prayed, “Swami! Please grant me permission to reside in this sacred Venkatachala.” Lord Venkateswara replied to Shiva, saying, “Reside beneath the Venkatachala mountain in the southeast direction.”)

Beneath the Venkatachala mountain, in Pātāla (the netherworld), Sage Kapila used to worship a Shiva Lingam. Near this Shiva Lingam, Kapila Tirtha also existed. (As per Shiva’s wish, both the Shiva Lingam worshipped by Sage Kapila and the Kapila Tirtha emerged onto the surface of the earth.) In this Kapila Tirtha, divine beings (Devas) performed holy baths, worshipped Lord Shiva, and offered prayers. Lord Kapileshwara is considered the Kshetrapalaka (guardian deity) of the sacred Tirumala region.

Within the Kapila Tirtha complex, temples of Nammalwar, Venugopala Swami, Narasimha Swami, and Lakshmi Narayana are present. In the Nammalwar temple, Saint Ramanujacharya resided for a year. (During this time, he listened to the Ramayana 18 times from Tirumala Nambi.)

On the final day of the Brahmotsavam festival of Govindaraja Swami, the deity, along with Sri Devi and Bhu Devi, is brought to the Venugopala Swami temple at Kapila Tirtha. There, an abhishekam (ritual bathing) is performed, followed by adorning the deity with fine garments and jewelry, offering Naivedyam (sacred food), and performing worship. (Finally, the Sudarshana Chakra is bathed in the sacred waters of Kapila Tirtha in a ritual known as 'Chakra Snanam.')

Similarly, on the last day of the Brahmotsavam festival of Kodanda Rama Swami, the deity, along with Sita and Lakshmana, is brought to the Venugopala Swami temple at Kapila Tirtha. Here, an abhishekam is performed, the deity is adorned, Naivedyam is offered, and worship is conducted. (Finally, the Sudarshana Chakra is bathed in the Kapila Tirtha waters, marking the conclusion of the festival.)

ISKCON Rādhā Govinda temple

The founder of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness (ISKCON), Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, visited the Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara temple in Tirumalā in 1974. Upon witnessing the grand arrangements at Tirumalā, he told his disciples, "We should also build temples like the Bālājī temple, equipped with excellent facilities and a golden gopuram."

As per Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions, his disciples constructed the ISKCON Rādhā Govinda temple in Alipiri. In this temple, along with Rādhā and Govinda, the eight sakhīs[34] are also enshrined. In all ISKCON temples, sacred texts like the Bhagavad Gītā, Bhāgavatam, Rāmāyaṇa, and Mahābhārata are also available. Various festivals are celebrated in all ISKCON temples, including Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī, Rādhāṣṭamī, Balarāma Pūrnimā, Śrī Rāma Navamī, Nṛsiṃha Caturdāśī, Govardhana Pūjā, Gaur Pūrnimā, and Nityānanda Trayodaśī.

Lecture Schedule:

- 8:30 AM : Morning Bhāgavatam Lecture
- 8:00 PM : Evening Bhagavad Gītā Lecture

Worship Schedule:

- 4:30 AM: Morning Māṅgala Ārati
- 7:30 AM: Darśana Ārati
- 12:30 PM: Rājabhoga Ārati
- 4:00 PM: Dhūpa Ārati
- 7:00 PM: Sandhyā Ārati
- 8:30 PM: Śayana Ārati

Offerings Schedule:

- 4:15 AM: Offerings of paramanna (a type of sweet rice) and kheer (a sweet pudding made from milk) are made.
- 7:15 AM: Offerings of fruits and fruit juices are made.
- 8:15 AM: Offerings of cāpātī, rice, dāl (lentils), vegetables, yogurt, and rāsam (a South Indian soup) are made.

34 Divine companions of Rādhā

- 12:00 PM: 26 types of dishes are offered, including six flavors: salty, savory, bitter, sweet, spicy, and sour. This offering is called rājabhoga naivedya.
- 3:30 PM: Offerings of cāpātī, rice, dāl, two types of vegetables, yogurt, and rāsam are made.
- 6:30 PM: Offerings of fruits and fruit juices are made.
- 8:20 PM: Offerings of two types of light food are made.
- 9:30 PM: Offerings of milk are made.

Kīrtan (Bhajan) Schedule:

- 4:30 AM: During the māṅgala āratī
- 7:30 AM: During the darśana āratī
- 7:00 PM: During the sandhyā āratī

At these times, devotees come together to chant the Mahāmantra:

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare /
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare //

After the māṅgala āratī, the devotees chant this Mahāmantra on the Tulasi beads for two hours.

In all ISKCON temples, in addition to worshiping Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, devotees also engage in Haṛe Kṛṣṇa Sankīrtana in various towns, villages, and homes, and they give spiritual lectures as well. The main topics of the lectures are as follows:

aiśvaryasya samagrasyā viryasyā yaśasaḥ śriyaḥ /
jñāna vairāgyayoścaiva ṣaṇṇāṁ bhaga itīṅgaṇā //

The six qualities of prosperity, strength, fame, beauty, knowledge, and renunciation – these are the

qualities that, when fully present, are attributed to God. (Lord Viṣṇu Purāṇa 6.5.47)

This verse is narrated in the Lord Viṣṇu Purāṇa by sage Parāśara, the father of Vyāsa Deva. God incarnates in every Yuga (era) by His own will. No one commands Him to do so; rather, He takes these divine incarnations out of compassion for the suffering souls in the material world. While scholars may sometimes question how God incarnates on Earth, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself reveals the answer in the Bhagavad-gītā (4.7-8): "To protect the righteous, to annihilate the wicked, and establish dharma, I incarnate in every Yuga." The incarnations of God are extensively described in the scriptures, and are supported by all the recognized ācāryas.

When sinful actions are committed, the consequences of those sins are not only borne by the person who performed the sinful act but also by those who assisted in the act. For instance, in the case of alcohol consumption, the sinful consequences extend not only to the person who drinks but also to those who manufacture, sell, and permit the consumption of alcohol. Scriptures also state that parents are accountable if they fail to properly raise their children. Therefore, it is essential to avoid the four types of sinful actions described in the scriptures and not assist others in committing them. These sinful actions include: intoxication, gambling, consuming impure foods (such as meat), and engaging in illicit sexual relations.

Unfortunately, in the current Kali Yuga, many people declare themselves to be incarnations of God. Those who lack knowledge of the scriptures blindly believe

their words and get deceived. It is important to examine whether the person claiming to be God possesses the six qualities described by sage Parāśara. If they do not fully possess these six qualities, they should be considered a fraud. Thus, if we do not learn about God from the scriptures, we, along with the deceiver, cannot avoid going to hell.

If we commit sinful actions by not following the scriptures, people will criticize us while we are still alive, and after death, we will experience hell and may have to be reborn many times as animals, birds, or insects. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa stated in the 23rd verse of the 16th chapter of the Bhagavad-gītā that, "One who does not follow the scriptures lives according to their own desires and neither attains success in this life, nor happiness, nor a high birth (such as heaven or liberation)." In the 40th verse of the 4th chapter of the Bhagavad-gītā, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa also says, "Those who do not follow the scriptures are ignorant, and those who do not have faith in the scriptures cannot attain the knowledge of God and fall into decline. They are neither happy in this world, nor in the next." Therefore, while alive, we should strive to follow the rules outlined in the scriptures in order to attain a high birth.

In the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (1.5.17), Nārada Muni said to Vyāsadeva, "Even if those who follow devotion to God do not attain liberation over time, there is no loss. However, those who only perform familial duties find that their actions end with death. Therefore, such actions do not yield any lasting benefit." In this world, no one can stay together permanently. We cannot

remain in our bodies forever; we all must die one day. After death, our relationship with our wife, children, and other relatives also cease. Everyone is born alone and dies alone. After death, we alone must experience the results of our actions.

In the Mahābhārata (Vana Parva), while explaining to Bhīma and Draupadī, Dharma Rāja (Yudhiṣṭhira) said, "Brother, husband-wife, mother-father, relatives, etc., unite in love, but for the sake of wealth, they break these relationships, become enemies, and end up killing each other." The more wealth one acquires, the greater the desire for more wealth. One only gains respect as long as they are earning; when earnings cease, no one respects them. The wealthy person fears even their own children, let alone others. Wealth gives rise to many bad habits such as violence, lying, deceit, lust, anger, anxiety, pride, quarrels, enmity, distrust, jealousy, infidelity, gambling, and drinking.

Is it appropriate to ask God for wealth, which generates so many evils? In the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (10.60.53), Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, "Those who, after attaining Me through vows, penance, and worship, do not desire to reach My divine abode and instead ask for worldly gains for their family life, are unfortunate. Such worldly gains can even be obtained in hell. Such people remain engrossed in the gratification of their senses, and therefore, hell is the suitable place for them."

In the same context, in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (3.30.3-5), Lord Kapila tells His mother, "An ignorant person thinks that his body, family members, wealth, and home are permanent. Every living being experiences

sensual pleasures, and hence, he is not ready to part with his body. Not only on this earth but even the living beings who are suffering in hell are not ready to give up their bodies."

In the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (10.51.20), the demigods told King Mucukunda, "You may ask for any boon other than liberation, for only Lord Nārāyaṇa can grant liberation." Pure devotees like King Ambarīṣa, Prahlāda, Dhruva, Pṛthu, and Bharata Mahārāja, as well as great ācāryas such as Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya, Madhvācārya, Anantācārya, Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Nityānanda Prabhu, and Mādhavendra Purī, all desired the divine abode of God and devotion to Him, not wealth or material desires. They are all our ideals, and therefore, we should follow their example and ask for what they asked for from the Lord, not indulge in any other material desires.

In the Mahābhārata, the Yakṣa asked Dharmarāja many questions. One of the questions was, "What is wealth?" Dharmarāja replied, "Scriptural knowledge is true wealth." In the Bhagavad Gītā (4.36), Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, "Even if you are a sinner, by being situated on the boat of divine knowledge, you can cross over the material world." (Bhagavad Gita 4.37)

"Just as fire turns wood to ash, O Arjuna, in the same way, the fire of knowledge burns all the results of material actions to ashes." (Bhagavad Gītā 4.38) "There is nothing in this world greater than knowledge. There is nothing purer and more elevated than knowledge related to the Supreme Lord." "Humility, freedom from pride, tolerance, simplicity, seeking the shelter

of a genuine guru, controlling the senses, absence of ego, proper understanding of birth, disease, old age, and death, seeing pleasure and pain equally, exclusive devotion to Me, association with devotees, knowledge of creation — these are all aspects of knowledge, and the opposite of them is ignorance." (Bhagavad Gītā 13.8-12)

Eating, sleeping, having children, and protecting oneself — these actions are the same for both animals and humans. Who am I? Where was I before I was born? Where will I go after I die? How did this creation come into existence? Is there a relationship between the Creator and me?

The intellect to understand these questions exists only in humans, not in animals. Only those who have such curiosity are true humans. Those who do not have such curiosity are like two-legged animals, as stated in the Hitopadeśa (25). Therefore, do not let this precious human birth go to waste.

"Not even a single moment of the past can be bought with crores of rupees," said Cāṇakya Paṇḍita. Therefore, understand the importance of time. If we assume we live for 80 years, then 5 years are spent in childhood, 15 years in education, and 5 years in old age. The remaining life is spent sleeping for 8 hours a day, working for 8 hours, commuting for 2 hours, eating for 2 hours, and bathing for 1 hour. This way, 21 hours are spent, and only 3 hours remain. These 3 hours are also spent in sickness, shopping, marriages, and festivals. Thus, 80 years pass away in vain. Let us understand how to utilize these wasted 80 years.

In the Bhagavad Gītā (3.9), Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna, "O son of Kunti! Perform your actions for the sake of Lord Viṣṇu, and by doing so, you will be freed from the bondage of actions." In this verse, Lord Kṛṣṇa is instructing to perform actions for Him. Simply worshiping Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not devotion; all actions performed for the pleasure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are considered devotional service.

Therefore, when we bathe, offer salutations to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and present incense, lamps, flowers, and Tulasi leaves, our time spent bathing is also counted as devotion. Similarly, when we bathe and prepare food with purity and offer it to the Lord, the time spent cooking, washing utensils, gathering ingredients, offering the food to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, taking the prāsāda (consecrated food), buying groceries, earning money, and even traveling for the purpose of earning money all become services infused with devotion.

Householders should use their earned wealth to maintain a Kṛṣṇa-centered life and minimize their body and family needs as much as possible to aid in serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Therefore, please wake up and try to understand the importance of the present human life. Among all living beings, the human birth that one gets in Bhārata varṣa (India) is the best. In the Śrī Lord Viṣṇu Purāṇa (Second Part, Third Chapter, Verse 23), it is said that only through the merits of countless previous births does one get a human birth in India. Like all other living beings, the human birth is temporary, but it provides the opportunity to attain the supreme abode of the

Lord. Therefore, before death, one should follow the path of devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and attain the supreme abode, which cannot be achieved by animals. If one fails in this effort and does not attain the Lord's abode, they are born into a family of devotees in their next life, where they again get the opportunity to perform devotion. (Bhagavad Gītā 6.41-42)

In the Satya Yuga, by meditating on Lord Viṣṇu, in the Treta Yuga by performing yajñas, and in the Dvāpara Yuga by serving the Lord's lotus feet, the fruits were attained, but in Kali Yuga, these same results can be achieved simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahāmantra. (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 12.3.52)

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare /
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare //

This 16-syllable Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahā-mantra eradicates all the faults of the Kali Yuga. No path is simpler than this, even after searching through all four Vedās.

Thus, the ISKCON temples provide teachings on the Bhagavad Gītā and the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam.

Through such outreach by ISKCON temples, many families have given up sinful actions like alcohol consumption, meat-eating, adultery, and gambling, and are now following the path of devotion to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, like the temple devotees.

There are more than a thousand ISKCON temples worldwide, such as the Tirupati ISKCON Rādhā-Govinda temple, and thousands of preaching centers. Therefore, I hope you will also visit your nearest ISKCON temple and follow the path of devotion with the devotees.

The ISKCON Rādhā-Govinda temple is located 4 kilometers from the railway station and 1 kilometer from Kapila Tīrtha.

In Alipiri, the Śrī Vārī Pādālu (Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's Footprints)

Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya once resided for a year at Kapil tīrtha in Tirupati. During that time, Tirumala Nambi would serve Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara every morning, travel from Tirumalā to Tirupati, and impart the knowledge of the Rāmāyaṇa to Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya, returning to Tirumalā by evening.

One day, due to not being able to have the darśana of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara at midday, Tirumala Nambi became saddened. Understanding his sorrow, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara manifested His footprints near the steps that lead to the mountain in Alipiri and said to Tirumala Nambi, "Seeing these footprints is equivalent to having darśana of Mine."

This made Tirumala Nambi extremely happy, and he began to visit and worship the footprints daily at midday.

The Śrī Vārī Pādālu in Alipiri are located one kilometer from the ISKCON temple and four kilometers from the railway station.

Padmāvati Devi temple - Padma Sarovara

In Tiruchāṇūr, at the Alamelumaṅga (Lakṣmī Devi) temple, the Goddess is referred to as Lakṣmī Devi

according to the Sthala Purāṇas, the scriptures, and the prescribed rituals such as archana. Annamācārya also repeatedly described Alamelumaṅga as Srī Mahālakṣmī in his kīrtanas.

This Lakṣmī Devi emerged from a lotus in the Padma Sarovara, which is why she is called Padmāvati Devi. Padmāvati Devi is depicted with four arms. In two of her hands, she holds a lotus, and in the other two hands, she displays the Varada and Abhaya mudras.

In Tamil, 'Alar' means flower, 'Mel' means above, and 'Maṅgai' means beautiful woman. Thus, Alamelumaṅga means "the beautiful woman shining in a lotus."

Padma Sarovara: Behind the Padmāvati Devi temple lies Padma Sarovara. Due to sage Bhṛgu's kicking of Lord Narāyaṇa's chest, Lakṣmī Devi went to the āsrama of sage Kapila, which is located in the netherworld (Pātāla). There, sage Kapila worshiped Lakṣmī Devi. Lord Narāyaṇa, in search of Lakṣmī Devi, arrived on Earth at the Lakṣmī Devi temple established by sage Agastya in Kolhapur. There, along with the sages, Lord Narāyaṇa began worshipping Lakṣmī Devi. Thus, ten years passed.

One day, through divine revelation (Akāśavāṇī), Lakṣmī Devi told Lord Narāyaṇa: "To the south, near the Kṛṣṇa river, dig a tank on the banks of the Suvarnamukhārī river. Place golden lotuses from heaven into that tank and worship Lakṣmī Devi there. In that place, you will have the vision of Lakṣmī Devi."

As per the instructions from the Akāśavāṇī (divine revelation), Lord Narāyaṇa bathed in the Kṛṣṇa River and the Suvarnamukhārī River, and dug a tank near

the hermitage of Śukadeva. Then Lord Narāyaṇa called upon the Wind God (Vāyu Deva) and asked him to bring golden lotuses from heaven. Following Lord Narāyaṇa's command, Vāyu Deva brought the golden lotuses from heaven. To protect the lotuses from wilting, Lord Narāyaṇa installed the Sungod[35] there. Then, while placing the golden lotuses into the tank, Lord Narāyaṇa worshipped Lakṣmī Devi for 12 years. On a Friday during the month of Kārtika, Lakṣmī Devi appeared from the Padma Sarovara. The demigods played their respective musical instruments and praised Lakṣmī Devi. Lakṣmī Devi placed a garland of flowers around Lord Narāyaṇa's neck and embraced him. As Lord Narāyaṇa, with Lakṣmī Devi, was on his way to Veṅkaṭācala, he spoke to the Padma Sarovara: "O Sarovara! I have found Lakṣmī Devi on your banks. From today, you will be known as Padma Sarovara. You will remain dear to Lakṣmī Devi. Whoever bathes in you, their sins will be destroyed." With this, Lord Narāyaṇa proceeded toward Veṅkaṭācala.

While Lakṣmī Devi and Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara were on their way to Veṅkaṭācala, the demigods prayed to Lakṣmī Devi, saying, "Mother! You have incarnated here; please remain here in the form of a deity and fulfill the desires of the devotees." In accordance with their wishes, Lakṣmī Devi took the form of the deity.

Padmāvatī Devi is served daily with Suprabhāta service, Sahasra Nāma-Arcana, Kalyāṇa Utsava, Ūñjāla Seva, and Ekānta Seva. On Mondays, there is Aṣṭadala Pādapadma-Ārādhana, on Fridays Abhiṣeka, and on Thursdays Tiruppāvāḍa Seva. Festivals like Brahmotsava

35 Even today, that temple of Sungod is situated next to the Padmāvatī Devī temple.

and Navarātri are also organized in honor of Padmāvatī Devi. On her appearance day, which falls on the fifth day of the bright fortnight of Kārtika, Padmāvatī Devi is bathed in Padma Sarovara with the Chakratāḻvār procession that arrives from Tirumalā on an elephant. This is the tradition here.

In the month of Kārtika, Brahmotsavas are organized for Padmāvatī Devi. On one of the days of the Brahmotsavam, offerings such as the flower garland, kumkum, turmeric, Attar,[36] sari, laddus, vadās, and other prasāda, which were offered to Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, are presented to Padmāvatī Devi.

In praise of Śrī Padmāvatī Devi, Ānnamācārya composed numerous kīrtanas. In one of the kīrtanas, he sings that, "Padmāvatī Devi, in Kolhāpur, Mahārāṣṭra, is worshiped as Śrī Mahālaxmī; in Nārāyaṇapur, as Śrī Padmāvatī; in Tiruchāṇūr, as Alamelumaṅga; and in the Tirumalā region, she resides as the Vyuha Lakṣmī on the chest of Śrīnivāsa, fulfilling the desires of her devotees. She, the Jagatmātā, is known by many names in different places, but she is the wife of Śrīnivāsa. Alamelumaṅga resides in the heart of Lord Nārāyaṇa, and Lord Nārāyaṇa resides in the heart of Alamelumaṅga. May both of them reside in my heart."

Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Upamaṁdira: In the Padmāvatī Devi temple, there is also a sub-temple dedicated to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. During the Mahābhārata war, Balarāma did not participate in the battle and was on a pilgrimage. After the war, Lord Kṛṣṇa came to Śukadeva's āśrama searching for Balarāma. Śukadeva served

36 A fragrant essential oil

Lord Kṛṣṇa and informed him that Balarāma would be arriving there during his pilgrimage, so he asked Lord Kṛṣṇa to wait there. Obeying Śukadeva's request, Lord Kṛṣṇa stayed there. Eventually, Balarāma arrived at the āśrama during his pilgrimage, and then Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma reunited. After returning to Dwārakā, Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma had a temple constructed in their honor by Śukadeva.

Lord Sundararāja (Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara) Upamaṁdira: This sub-temple is located next to the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma temple. Lord Sundararāja is enshrined here, standing at a height of eight feet, along with Śrīdevī and Bhūdevī. The temple also houses the festival images of Lord Sundararāja, Śrīdevī, and Bhūdevī.

This Padmāvatī Devi temple is situated six kilometers from the Tirupati railway station.

Śrīnivāsa Maṅgāpuram

After the marriage of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and Padmāvatī Devi, they stayed at the āśrama of Agastya Muni for six months. Today, a temple dedicated to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara stands at this location, known as Kalyāṇa Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. The āśrama of Agastya Muni is situated two kilometers from here. There are 2,400 steps leading from Śrīnivāsa Maṅgāpuram to Tirumalā. These steps were built by the emperor named Toṇḍamaṇa. Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, along with Padmāvatī Devi, ascended these very steps to reach Veṅkaṭācala.

Śrīnivāsa Maṅgāpuram is located 12 kilometers from the Tirupati railway station.

Suvarṇamukhārī (Svarṇa Mukhī) River and Agastyeśvara temple

Based on Chapter 29 of the Śrī Veṅkaṭācala Māhātmya from the second section of the SkandaPurāṇa:

The Pāṇḍavas, after marrying Draupadī, ruled over the kingdom of Indraprastha. During that time, once, sage Nārada came to the Pāṇḍavas and narrated the story of the brothers Sund and Upasund, explaining: "Your wife Draupadī will stay with each Pāṇḍava one year at a time. When Draupadī is alone with one of her husbands, no other Pāṇḍava should visit her. If anyone does so, they must undertake a pilgrimage for one year." The Pāṇḍavas agreed to this rule.

Once, a brāhmaṇa's cows were stolen by thieves. The brāhmaṇa went to Arjuna and prayed to him to save his cows from the thieves. Arjuna went to his chamber for his weapons, where Dharmarāja was present with Draupadī. Arjuna then remembered the rule set by the sage Nārada. However, to save the brāhmaṇa's cows, Arjuna armed himself and destroyed the thieves, returning the cows to the brāhmaṇa. Later, Arjuna told Dharmarāja, "According to the rule taught by the sage Nārada, I will undertake a pilgrimage for one year."

Dharmarāja said to Arjuna, "You came to the chamber to save the brāhmaṇa's cows. A lie told for the sake of a brāhmaṇa also becomes truth, and a sin is transformed into virtue. Therefore, you do not need to undertake pilgrimages." Arjuna then replied, "You yourself said that under no circumstances should one abandon

Dharma. Please allow me to go on this pilgrimage." Dharmarāja finally agreed.

During his pilgrimage, Arjuna reached the banks of the Suvarṇamukhārī river, where he paid his obeisances to the holy river, performed worship, and bathed in it. After this, he carried out acts of charity and righteousness. Following this, Arjuna arrived at the āsrama of sage Bhāradvāja, where he offered his respects to the sage. Sage Bhāradvāja welcomed Arjuna and those with him, offering them hospitality through the Kāmadhenū cow.

"Revered sage! How did this Suvarṇamukhārī river appear? Please tell me the glory of this river." Then, sage Bhāradvāja narrated the story as follows:

One day, sage Agastya, having completed his morning rituals, was on his way to worship Lord Śiva. At that moment, there was a celestial voice: "O revered sage! There is no river in this region. Please arrange for a river to ensure the welfare of the residents here."

Hearing this divine voice, sage Agastya meditated intensely on Lord Brahmā. Pleased with his penance, Lord Brahmā appeared and asked him for a boon. Sage Agastya prayed, "O Lord Brahmā! There is no river flowing in this place. Please provide a river for the salvation of the people here."

Lord Brahmā remembered Goddess Gaṅgā. Goddess Gaṅgā manifested and Lord Brahmā instructed her to go to this place with sage Agastya. Goddess Gaṅgā followed Lord Brahmā's command and walked behind sage Agastya. Along the way, the residents of the region

respectfully greeted Goddess Gaṅgā and worshipped her. Seeing this, Lord Vāyu spoke, "Just as humans experience immense joy when they obtain gold, the residents of this region are now blessed to be in the presence of Gaṅgā. Therefore, this river will be named Suvarṇamukhārī."

Thus, the river came to be known as Suvarṇamukhārī. Other rivers that flow into Suvarṇamukhārī include the Mahānadi, Āgrāpath, and Kālva River. The Kālva River originates from the Veṅkaṭācala Mountain (this sacred river flows near Śrīnivāsa Maṅgāpuram. On its banks, the āsrama of sage Agastya and the Agastyeśvara Śivālaya are located).

This Suvarṇamukhārī river is located near the Agastyeśvara Śivālaya, which is two kilometers away from Śrīnivāsa Maṅgāpuram.

8

Āḻvārs' Hymns in Praise of Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara

The term Āḻvār means "a pure devotee ācārya immersed in the divine qualities of the Lord." There are twelve Āḻvārs in total. The Āḻvārs praised various forms of Lord Viṣṇu in 4,000 verses known as Pāśurams. These verses are collectively referred to as the Divya Prabandham. Here, we are presenting a few of them as a summary.

Śrī Poyīgai Āḻvār

Poyīgai Āḻvār incarnated near a small lake close to Kāñcīpuram. He is considered the incarnation of Mahā-Viṣṇu's conch, Pāñcajanya. He composed a hymn in praise of Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara:

The sins of those desiring wealth and the sins of devotees worshiping Mahā-Viṣṇu are destroyed in a moment in the Tirumalā region. The demigods, who bestow temporary pleasures like home, wife, children, wealth, and status, and the brāhmaṇas endowed with the knowledge of the Vedās, daily bring incense, lamps, fragrant flowers, holy water, and offerings to serve Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, who resides in Veṅkaṭācala.

Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, with His conch blowing from His red lips, holds Tirumalā in His heart. Mahā-Viṣṇu, who is of the color of the ocean, incarnated

as Varāha to protect the Earth. He incarnated as Kṛṣṇa, lifted the Govardhana hill, protected the gopas, and destroyed Kaṁsa. That very Mahā-Viṣṇu is now granting His darśan to His devotees in Tirumalā.

Lord Viṣṇu, who lies in the Kṣīrasāgara and took the Nṛsiṁha form to kill Hiraṇyakaśipu, is now present in Tirumalā as Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara.

The glory of Lord Nārāyaṇa, who resides in Vaikuṇṭha, cannot be fully understood even after contemplating for thousands of ages. The same Lord Nārāyaṇa, who took various incarnations on Earth, now resides in Veṅkaṭācala. Mahā-Viṣṇu, who is worshipped as a sacred verse pervading the entire world, is now residing in Tirumalā, the region that grants liberation. Devotees who serve Him with devotion and faith will surely attain liberation.

Standing in Tirumalā and meditating upon Śrīnivāsa (Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara) erases all sins. Beautiful women, on the day of Dvādaśī, adorn themselves with floral ornaments, and with incense, lamps, and arati, they perform the worship of the Lord. The fragrance of their incense smoke hides the stars in the sky. The very mountain where Śrī Rāma once resided, who killed the illusionary golden deer, Mārīca, is now Tirumalā.

O mind! Puruṣottama Mahā-Viṣṇu, who is ever ready to protect us in all ages, resides in the hearts of His devotees. The same Lord Nārāyaṇa, who reclines in the Kṣīrasāgara, now resides in Tirumalā as Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara. Know this, that same Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara forever dwells in my heart!

Śrī Pūdatta Āḻvār

Pūdatta Āḻvār incarnated in a Mādhavī flower near Mahābalipuram in Tamil Nadu. He is considered an incarnation of Kaumodakī, the mace of Mahā-Viṣṇu. Pūdatta Āḻvār glorified Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara as follows:

Lord Nārāyaṇa, adorned with divine virtues praised by celestial beings and the devotees of Vaikuṇṭha, has taken many incarnations for the protection of Dharma. For those who could not witness Him in those eras, Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara resides in Tirumalā, removing the sufferings of His devotees and blessing them abundantly.

The sacred hills of Tirumalā, surrounded by dense bamboo forests and other trees, remain cool and tranquil. Worshipped as the Lord of Lords by sages and celestial beings, the same Lord who reclines on the Kṣīrasāgara (Ocean of Milk), and who, in His Kṛṣṇa incarnation, slew the demon Keśī who appeared in the form of a horse, now grants His divine darśan (sacred vision) in Tirumalā.

At the lotus feet of Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, who resides amidst the bamboo forests of Tirumalā, I offer my obeisances through full prostration. May my tongue eternally sing the glories of His divine pastimes.

The devotees who serve the lotus feet of Mahā-Viṣṇu, who resides in Tirumalā and is worshipped by the celestial demigods, remain unaffected by wealth or its loss. They feel neither happiness upon gaining wealth nor sorrow upon losing it.

The compassionate Mahā-Viṣṇu, whose radiance resembles a sapphire gem, whose hands overflow with the nectar of mercy, and who is the eternal protector of devotees, is graciously present in Tirumalā. In Tirumalā, adorned with numerous sacred places, devotees become completely absorbed in meditation upon Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara. His divine presence in Tirumalā is an invaluable treasure for devotees.

In Tirumalā, the monkeys wake up at dawn, bathe in lotus-filled lakes, and then offer fresh fragrant flowers to Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara with folded hands in deep reverence.

O Heart! Arise in this same manner! With a desire to attain His lotus feet, chant the sacred names of Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, who resides like a priceless ornament upon this Earth, offer fresh flowers at His feet and surrender yourself completely.

In the forests of Tirumalā, an elephant cuts down a bamboo tree, dips it in honey, and offers it with love to his beloved female elephants. In this magnificent and sacred Tirumalā, Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara resides eternally, blessing all His devotees.

Śrī Peyāḻvār

Śrī Pey Āḻvār was born in Mylapore, Chennai. He is considered the incarnation of Nandaka, the divine sword of Mahā-Viṣṇu. Pey Āḻvār offered his heartfelt praises to Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara in the following manner:

Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara of Tirumalā, who reveals Himself to both the four Vedās and even the most

humble devotees, is worshipped by the residents of Devaloka, who prostrate before Him with their crowns touching the ground. Those who meditate upon the lotus feet of Puruṣottama, Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara in their hearts lose all desires for worldly pleasures, and attaining the grace of Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara on Śeṣādri hill becomes effortless for them."

The heart that constantly meditates upon Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, who is adorned with Tulasī garlands, becomes as pure as the sacred region of Tirumalā itself.

In ancient times, Mahā-Viṣṇu, in His Varāha incarnation, lifted the entire Earth with His tusks. That very Mahā-Viṣṇu now resides upon the sacred Tirumalā hills.

On a sacred stone in Tirumalā, a female monkey gazes at the moon in the sky and tells the male monkey, "Bring me that moon!" Such are the enchanting and divine sights of Tirumalā.

In the past, Mahā-Viṣṇu incarnated as Vāmana and, with His divine intelligence, obtained the Earth as alms from King Bali. That same Mahā-Viṣṇu now resides in Tirumalā.

In the clear ponds of Tirumalā, a male monkey sees its reflection in the water, mistakes it for another monkey, and flees in fear. Then, in an attempt to pluck fruits from a Bilva tree, it climbs hurriedly. These sacred and playful sights unfold daily in Tirumalā.

This sacred region of Tirumalā is the very place where Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in the past, destroyed Vatsāsura

with His divine stick to protect the sacred Bilva fruits. Thus, the glory of Tirumalā, where Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara resides eternally, shines with unparalleled radiance, offering salvation and bliss to all His devotees.

Whenever there is any discussion about a hill, my daughter immediately praises the sacred Tirumalā hill. A sacred elephant offers Surabhi flowers to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, the Lord of the Devas. The youth of the Kurava community, who know no place other than Tirumalā, adorn their wrists with bangles and dance in devotion to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara.

Mahā-Viṣṇu, in His Śrī Kṛṣṇa incarnation, once danced with a pot balanced on His head. That same Mahā-Viṣṇu now resides on the sacred Tirumalā hill.

To praise the lotus feet of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and sing His glories is the sole purpose of our tongues.

Śrī Tirumaḻiśai Āḻvār

Tirumaḻiśai Āḻvār was born in the village of Tirumaḻiśai near Chennai. He is considered an incarnation of Sudarśana cakra, the divine discus of Mahā-Viṣṇu.

Once, Tirumaḻiśai Āḻvār could not find the sacred clay (tilak) necessary for applying his forehead mark. Despite searching everywhere, he couldn't find it. Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara appeared in his dream and guided him to a specific location where the sacred clay could be found. Following the Lord's instructions, Tirumaḻiśai Āḻvār obtained the sacred clay the next morning.

Tirumaḻiśai Āḻvār praised Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in the following manner: "I always desire to worship Śrīman Nārāyaṇa, who manifests in the sacred assemblies (Tirugoṣṭi), and I yearn for the auspicious fruits of such worship. Śrīman Nārāyaṇa, who is my ultimate goal, has descended from Vaikuṇṭha and manifested as Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara on the sacred Tirumalā hills. I will never neglect His worship! That Lord protects me from diseases and blesses me with all auspicious results. I pray earnestly with an intense longing to behold the divine form of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara residing in Tirumalā."

During the rainy season, the waterfalls of Tirumalā overflow with water, carrying along precious gems and jewels. Mistaking these glowing gems for fire, herds of elephants stand frozen in fear. The snakes, perceiving the gems' radiance as lightning, retreat into their burrows.

In such a sacred Tirumalā, where Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara resides, I yearn to have His darśan.

When I praised Tirumalā, I realized I attained the supreme position of Vaikuṇṭha. Knowing this secret, I continuously meditate on the sacred Tirumalā. I am eternally bound to the lotus feet of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, who is glorified in the Vedas.

On the day of Śravaṇa Nakṣatra, the sound of glories sung by the devotees reverberates in Tirumalā.

"O Supreme Abode! You who reside in Tirumalā! Even though You dwell in my heart, I still desire to come to Tirumalā and worship You there. O humans! If you wish to erase your sins, go to Tirumalā—a sacred place

surrounded by sky-touching peaks, renowned across the fourteen worlds—and offer your prayers there. The Tirumalā region has the power to destroy sins, which are like our enemies.

Lord Brahmā, who emerged from the lotus, and Lord Śiva, who possesses three eyes, perform daily worship at the lotus feet of Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, who resides in Tirumalā. Lord Nārāyaṇa, eternally youthful, stands in Tirumalā, bestowing blessings upon everyone. Just as fallen trees do not sway, devotees stand still with folded hands before the lotus feet of Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara."

Tirumalā, with its cool streams of water, is an extremely precious place for both the demigods and the inhabitants of the earthly realm.

The sacred region of Tirumalā is adorned with yālis, elephants, lions, golden mines, rubies, pearls, fragrant flowers, koṅgals, monkeys, hunters, and celestial peaks.

The supremely radiant Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, who shines like the finest blue sapphire, resides in this sacred Tirumalā.

Devotees come to Tirumalā without any material desires and worship Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara with deep devotion. The sacred Tirumalā region, by its mere darśan, removes physical afflictions and dreadful sins.

To protect the demigods, Śrīman Nārāyaṇa, wielding the divine discus (Cakra Āyudha), resides eternally in Tirumalā.

Some devotees visit Tirumalā with the desire to attain liberation after death while worshiping Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara. However, superior to them are those who understand the Lord's desires, meditate on Him with unwavering devotion, and serve His devotees with humility. Such individuals alone experience true happiness in this world.

Śrī Nammāḻvār

Nammāḻvār was born in Āḻvār Tirunagari in the Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. He is famously known as Nammāḻvār, a great devotee of Lord Viṣṇu, particularly revered as Viṣvaksena of Vaikuṇṭha.

Nammāḻvār praised Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara in the following way:

O charioteer! Drive our chariot swiftly. You ask where are we going? Alright, I will tell you. We must go to the sacred Tirumalā region. There, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, resides in His divine form. In such a holy land, where numerous streams flow like a necklace of white pearls, lead our chariot quickly.

My daughter's hair is still short. She doesn't know how to wear clothes properly. She speaks like a small child, and she keeps moving around, her gaze not fixed. Yet, despite being such a small child, she clearly and earnestly chants the name of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's sacred place, Tiruveṅgaṭam (Tirumalā).

Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, who resides in Tirumalā and is the abode of all His devotees, is the foundation of all our lives. The Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara who appeared in Tirumalā

loves flowers immensely. O Father! My Lord, who resides in the cool Tirumalā! The mighty one who conquered the kingdom of Lanka! The archer who pierced through seven great trees! My dear Lord, who wears Tulasi garlands in Tirumalā! O Lord, who protects in the past, present, and future, and is the friend in times of crisis, I bow to you, O Supreme Soul, residing in Tirumalā!

It is our duty to offer such prayers. Whoever offers such prayers, all their sins and the karmic bonds that lead them to sin burn away like cotton in the fire and are destroyed.

The demigods and the leader of the demigods, Viśwaksena, offer fragrant flowers, sacred water, and shining lamps while bowing their heads in reverence to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. The Tirumalā region, where Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara manifested, can bestow liberation. The same Lord Nārāyaṇa, who lifted the Govardhan hill to protect the residents of Gokula and the cows from rain, and who claimed the earth in three steps from Bali Cakravartī, resides at Tirumalā as He wills. By bowing to the peaks of Tirumalā, our sins are eradicated. Those who enshrine the feet of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in their hearts and offer praises with their mouths, He, the Lord, frees them from the cycle of birth and death.

Adi-Śeṣa, who serves as the bed for the Lord, the protector of the universe, and the master of Vaikuṇṭha, resides in Tirumalā. Before the end of life, before one's strength wanes, one should go to Tirumalā and offer obeisances to Padmanābha Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. In the sacred region of Tirumalā, located in the northern part of Tamil Nadu, the Supreme Mahā-Viṣṇu has

manifested. Though ignorant fools may call me mad, I remain undisturbed and continue to wander, constantly chanting the 108 names of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara everywhere, without concern.

While chanting the name of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, dancing, singing, and glorifying, the deities themselves serve the devotees. Even if you bear enmity towards me or find my words unpleasant, listen to me. When Tirumalā manifested on Earth through my Father, the Devādideva, why should I worship anyone else? Lord Nārāyaṇa, who resides in Vaikuṇṭha, has manifested as Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in Tirumalā to destroy our sins and liberate us from the cycle of rebirth. Since Tirumalā is on Earth, why should I go elsewhere? Even the demigods come to Tirumalā to fulfill their desires.

Śrī Kulaśekhara Āḻvār

Śrī Kulaśekhara Āḻvārs birth took place in the divine land of Thiruvanjikulam in Kerala. He was an incarnation of the divine gem of Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu's neck, the Kaustubha mani. Kulaśekhara Āḻvārs praised Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in the following manner:

I desire to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who defeated the seven bulls to marry Bhūdevī. I do not wish for wealth that aids in increasing the muscles of the body. I wish to take birth as a crane living on the banks of the Tirumalā lake, where Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, holding the conch in His left hand, resides. Though celestial women such as Rambhā may dance around me, enjoying the pleasures of Indraloka, I do not long for such material pleasures. Even if I am offered the opportunity to rule as an

emperor on Earth, I would not desire it. I wish to take birth as a fish in the sacred ponds of Tirumalā, filled with fragrant flowers and nectar-filled forests.

In Tirumalā, like in Vaikuṇṭha, the demigods such as Lord Śiva, Lord Brahmā, and Lord Indra are trying to enter to witness the divine presence of My Lord along with the devotees. I wish to remain as a servant of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in Tirumalā, the one who holds a golden vessel to catch the betel that is spit out. Just as the demigods praise Ananta Padmanābha, who rests in the Kṣīra Sāgara, the sound emerging from the swarms of bees in Tirumalā seems to praise Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in the same way. In such a Tirumalā, I desire to take birth as a Campā tree.

I do not wish to ride an elephant that frightens the audience, or desire jewels and ornaments, or become an emperor on this Earth. I only wish to reside as a humble tree in the abode of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in Tirumalā. I do not wish to watch the dances of celestial nymphs like Rambhā and Urvashī, nor do I wish to stay with them. I want to become a peak in Tirumalā.

I do not wish to become a king who sits beneath a moon-like white umbrella and gains all praise. I desire to take birth as a lake filled with fragrant and beautiful flowers in Tirumalā. When Candramouli Lord Śiva, Lord Brahmā, and Lord Indra perform their sacrifices in accordance with their positions, Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, who is glorified by the Vedas in Tirumalā, fulfills all their desires. I wish to become the path that leads to the sacred region of Tirumalā, where the dust of the devotees' feet constantly falls upon me. O Ananta, the

great soul, Tirumalā Veṅkaṭeśvara, the sages, demigods, and devotees always behold your divine form. I wish to be the threshold of the deity room, where I can always witness your presence. Even though the opportunity to rule the fourteen worlds and embrace Urvashī may come, I do not desire such things. Instead, I wish to take birth as an insignificant object at the place where Lord Nārāyaṇa, who manifested as Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in Tirumalā with lips as red as a ruby, resides.

Śrī Periyā Āḻvār

Periyā Āḻvār was born in Srivilliputhur and is considered an incarnation of Garuḍa. Periyā Āḻvār praised Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in the following way:

O beautiful moon with cool rays! Your light spreads across the ten directions. However, due to the radiance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's body, your brilliance has become dim. In the mountain-studded Tirumalā, Śrīnivāsa raised his arms to invite you. Hurry, come before the little child Śrī Kṛṣṇa's hands hurt!

In Tirumalā, amidst fragrant flowers, Śrīnivāsa, I have prepared an umbrella and slippers for You. Yet, You went to the forest without them to graze the calves. Running after the calves in the terrifying forest, Your tender feet have turned red. You have grown thin, my dear child!

In Tirumalā, adorned with peaks that touch the sky, resides Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, who incarnated for the salvation of all beings in the worlds. He is the one who was bound by Yaśodā and is the protector who forgives

the faults of devotees and preserves them. I have inscribed Your wheel on my soul and body and now await Your grace.

Śrī Tiruppāṇ Āḻvār

Tiruppāṇ Āḻvār was born near Śrīraṅga Kṣetra. He is considered to have incarnated from the Śrīvatsa of Lord Nārāyaṇa. Tiruppāṇ Āḻvār praised Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in the following way:

O highly sacred Ādideva of this world, in the fragrant Tirumalā region, you, in the form of Veṅkaṭeśvara, are showering mercy without any desire for fruits. That Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara is residing here to make me the servant of His servants.

In Tirumalā, monkeys are always jumping from one branch of a tree to another. The demigods come to Tirumalā and worship Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara with fragrant flowers. That same Lord rests on Ādiśeṣa in Śrīraṅgam.

Śrī Tirumangai Āḻvār

Tirumangai Āḻvār was born in the village of Ālinādar near Tirukkurai in Tamil Nadu. He is considered an incarnation of Lord Nārāyaṇa's bow, Śāraṅga. Tirumangai Āḻvār praised Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in the following way:

The great Mahā-Viṣṇu, who rests in the vast Kṣīrasāgara, incarnated as Śrī Kṛṣṇa and killed the tree-demon Kuruṇḍa and the crane-like demon Baka, and now He resides in Tirumalā, in the form of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, surrounded by ponds filled with red fish.

The abode of Śrīman Nārāyaṇa, who blesses those who chant His name with liberation, is the sacred land of Tirumalā. Therefore, O mind! Go to Tirumalā and chant the holy name of Śrī Hari.

The parents who gave me birth and nurtured me, I considered them my ultimate destiny. I regarded my beautiful wife as my everything and my children as my support. Thus, ensnared by worldly attachments, I endured much suffering. After being born in a lowly form, like a dog, I have now understood that only You, O Lord, are eternal. Hence, I am now waiting for Your divine vision.

O Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, who resides in the fragrant Tirumalā, adorned with scented flowers and bamboo groves, kindly accept me as Your servant and shower Your grace upon me.

O Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, who manifested in Tirumalā! Bewitched by the beauty of women with eyes like that of a deer, I have committed numerous terrible sins, which will lead me to hell. Realizing my sins, I have come to take refuge in You, with repentance in my heart. Accept me as Your servant and grant me a place in Your service. O Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, who descended upon the cool Tirumalā mountains, amidst the roaring clouds! While committing sinful acts, I have killed many people without any purpose. I have behaved mercilessly, without showing compassion to those who came seeking alms, and have insulted them. O Lord! At the sound of Your name, I have come to take shelter in You. O Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, accept me as Your servant and assign me to Your service.

I have taken birth in all the different species of this world. I have assumed many forms and shapes in various births. In none of those births have I performed righteous deeds. I did not understand the meaning of life and have now grown weary, entangled in the cycle of birth and death.

O Tirumleśvara, who manifested on Tirumalā on Earth, in this birth I have taken refuge at Your feet. Kindly accept me as Your servant. After committing many sinful deeds, now, in my old age, unable to find the right path, I have come to take refuge in Your lotus feet. I do not even know how to praise You. O Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, who resides on the lofty peaks of Tirumalā, become my father, cleanse me of my sins, protect me, and grant me a place in Your service.

This body, made up of the five elements of Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Sky, is afflicted with disease and pain, and I cannot find the way to come to You. O Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, who is the Supreme Abode, with whom I share all my relations! I have taken refuge at Your feet. Please, make me Your servant!

In my childhood, due to ignorance, I committed many sinful acts. In my youth, I became a slave to women and performed improper actions to satisfy them. Now, I am facing hardships due to illness and poverty. In my previous births, I experienced pleasures, but due to the sinful actions performed in those births, I had to be reborn again and again. O Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, who resides in Tirumalā! In this birth, I am observing a vow with the hope of receiving Your compassion and grace. However, my mind remains unsettled in this effort. O

Supreme Abode! Free me from the cycle of birth and death and grant me a place in Your service! No matter how much penance one performs, we cannot escape this human birth, but You, O Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, with compassion as vast as the ocean, take those who come to You in refuge to Your divine abode and liberate them from the bonds of this world.

Śrī Godā Devī (Āṇḍāl)

Godā Devī's appearance occurred in Śrīvilliputtūr in Lord Viṣṇucitta's Tulsi garden. She was an incarnation of Bhūdevī. Godā Devī praised Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in the following way:

O Kāmadeva! I have worshiped You with fragrant flowers at all three times. O Kāmadeva, before I angrily reproach You, the one who is adorned with flowers, who carries the name of Govinda, who performs wondrous deeds, and who, leaving Vaikuṇṭha, holds the discus in Tirumalā, giving darśana to all living beings, may Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara rush to me and inspire me to marry Him and embrace me.

O Cuckoo, who drinks the nectar of Campā flowers and sings in a sweet voice! The Vaikuṇṭha-resident, who holds the white Pāñcajanya conch in His hand, stands in Tirumalā in His divine form and gives darśana. He has entered my heart, made me suffer, and now sees my suffering as joy. O Cuckoo, call out with your sweet voice to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, the resident of Tirumalā, and invite Him to come to me.

O dense black clouds! Who have spread across the sky like pots. Is Lakṣmīnātha Mahā-Viṣṇu with you near the

waterfalls falling from the sacred springs of Tirumalā? My tears, in the separation from Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, are flowing like torrents of rain. Is it appropriate for Lakṣmīnātha to cause me such suffering?

O black clouds, who bring cool rains during the monsoon in Tirumalā, I always remember the feet of Lord Nārāyaṇa, who is victorious in battle. Just as the leaves of the āk tree fall during the monsoon, I am wilting in the separation from Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. In this long journey of life, has Veṅkaṭeśvara ever come and spoken any kind words to me? O clouds, thundering like the roar of elephants, who dwell on the high peaks of Tirumalā, can Mahā-Viṣṇu, who sleeps on the thousand-headed Ādiśeṣa, say any kind words to me? Can that Lord save an innocent woman, who is wilting in His remembrance?

9

The Pastimes of Pure Devotees in Tirumalā

Śrī Yāmunācārya

Yāmunācārya was born in 916 CE in Madurai, Tamiḻnāḍu, to Īśvaramuni, the son of Nāthamuni, who belonged to the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition. For several years, Nāthamuni resided with his son Īśvaramuni and daughter-in-law on the banks of the Yamunā River in Vṛndāvana. After returning home from the Yamunā bank, Īśvaramuni had a son. In memory of their residence on the banks of the Yamunā, Nāthamuni named his grandson "Yāmuna."

Yāmunācārya spoke to his disciples in a sermon, saying, "When Lord Śrīnivāsa is adorned with various types of flowers in Tirumalā, Nammāḻvār becomes exceedingly pleased. According to Nammāḻvār, who is called 'Parāṅkuṣa Divyaśūra', this is the most excellent service offered to Lord Śrīnivāsa by a devotee. Earlier, I went to Tirumalā and performed floral service for Lord Śrīnivāsa for some time. However, due to the cold environment and the disturbance caused by insects, I was unable to endure and had to return from Tirumalā. Thus, I was only able to serve Lord Śrīnivāsa for a short period of time. Therefore, if someone goes to Tirumalā and performs floral service while serving Lord Śrīnivāsa, it will be equivalent to honoring the teachings of Nammāḻvār."

After a while, a disciple named Tirumala Nambi stood up and said to Yāmunācārya, "Gurudeva! As you have mentioned, I will go and serve Lord Śrīnivāsa." Hearing this, Yāmunācārya became extremely pleased, and embracing Tirumala Nambi, he said, "Serve Lord Śrīnivāsa and receive the Lord's grace."

Śrī Tirumala Nambi

Among the pure devotees of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, Tirumala Nambi was one. He was born in 973 CE and is also known as Śrīśailapūrṇa. Tirumala Nambi's guru was Yāmunācārya. For the service of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, Yāmunācārya sent Tirumala Nambi to Veṅkaṭācalam (Tirumalā). Tirumala Nambi's sister was Kānti Mati Devī, and as her son, Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya was born. Upon looking at Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya's birth chart, Tirumala Nambi gave him the name Ilai Āḻvār.

Every day, Tirumala Nambi would fetch water from Pāpanāśana and perform the bathing ceremony for Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, adorning Him with flowers. One day, when Tirumala Nambi was bringing water from Pāpanāśana, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara appeared before him in the form of a child and said, "Grandfather! Grandfather! I am thirsty. Please give me water." Tirumala Nambi replied, "This water has been fetched from Pāpanāśana for Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. If I give you this water, it will be defiled, and the abhiṣeka of the Lord will be delayed until I return to fetch more water. Therefore, go to Pāpanāśana and drink water there." Saying this, he proceeded ahead. In the form of a child, the Lord shot an arrow from behind, creating a hole in the water pot and drank the water.

Feeling distressed, Tirumala Nambi saw that the child shot an arrow on the mountain, and water appeared. Then the child said to Tirumala Nambi, "Grandfather! Grandfather! Now, you do not need to fetch water from Pāpanāśana. Take the water from this mountain for Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara." With that, the child vanished. Tirumala Nambi realized that this child was none other than Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in disguise. From that day onwards, Tirumala Nambi began to use the water that came from the mountain. Since it came from the mountain, it was named Ākāśagaṅgā (the Celestial Ganges). Even today, the task of bringing water in the silver pots of Tirumal Nambi is carried out on an elephant. On the day of the manifestation of Ākāśagaṅgā, the festival deity of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara is taken to Ākāśagaṅgā, and the festival is celebrated there.

Once, Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya stayed at Tirupati's Kapila tīrtha for one year. During this time, Tirumala Nambi would come from Tirumalā to Tirupati every morning after serving Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, and would recite the Rāmāyaṇa to Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya. By evening, he would return to Tirumalā. However, he felt distressed because he could not have the darśana (vision) of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in the afternoon.

Understanding this, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara set His foot impressions near the steps ascending the mountain at Alīpīrī and told Tirumala Nambi, "Seeing these foot impressions will be as good as having My darśana." Hearing this, Tirumala Nambi became very pleased and began to visit the foot impressions every afternoon to worship them.

Once, a disciple of Tirumala Nambi wore a garland that was offered to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. In a dream, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara appeared and informed Tirumala Nambi about this. Tirumala Nambi, reprimanding his disciple, said, "From today, no one is to use a garland that has been offered to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara." After this, he arranged for the garlands offered to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara to be placed in a well meant for the demigods.

As Tirumala Nambi was about to leave his body, he prayed to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, saying, "O Lord! I have served You as per the instructions of my Guru Yāmunācārya. Now I am leaving my body. If I have made any mistake in Your service, please forgive me." He then addressed all the devotees present, saying, "If I have committed any offense towards all of you, please forgive me." Saying this, he left his body.

The devotees installed a deity of Tirumala Nambi in the house where he had lived. That house is now known as the "Tirumala Nambi temple." On the day of Tirumala Nambi's appearance, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, along with Śrīdevī and Bhūdevī, visits the Tirumala Nambi temple, blesses him, accepts the worship, and then returns. During festivals, when Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's festival deity passes by the Tirumala Nambi temple, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara stops there, gazes at Tirumala Nambi, and then continues on His way.

Śrī Kāñcīpūrṇa (Tirukkacchi Nambi)

Kāñcīpūrṇa was born in the year 1015 in the village of Poo Irunda Valli, near Kāñcīpuram. He was a devotee of Lord Varadarāja of Kāñcīpuram. Kāñcīpūrṇa had a

servant named Varada. One day, Varada asked him, "O Lord! Will I be able to go to Vaikuṇṭha?" Kāñcīpūrṇa replied, "I will ask Lord Varadarāja and let you know."

Every day, Kāñcīpūrṇa performed Cāmar service to Lord Varadarāja and conversed with him. That night, Kāñcīpūrṇa asked Lord Varadarāja, "Will my servant be able to go to Vaikuṇṭha?" Lord Varadarāja responded, "Yes, he will go." Kāñcīpūrṇa shared this news with Varada, who was extremely happy.

A few days later, Varada again asked Kāñcīpūrṇa, "O Lord! Will you go to Vaikuṇṭha first, or will I?" Kāñcīpūrṇa replied, "I will ask Lord Varadarāja and let you know." That night, as Kāñcīpūrṇa was in solitary service, he asked Lord Varadarāja the same question. Lord Varadarāja told him, "Your servant will go to Vaikuṇṭha, but you will not."

Shocked, Kāñcīpūrṇa asked, "O Lord! I serve you, and I converse with you every day. Yet, why can't I go to Vaikuṇṭha?" Lord Varadarāja explained, "In Vaikuṇṭha, there is no place for my servants. Only the servants of my devotees are allowed in Vaikuṇṭha. Those who serve my devotees are worthy of going to Vaikuṇṭha. You do not serve my devotees, and you have no Guru. Therefore, you will not be allowed to enter Vaikuṇṭha."

Upon hearing this, Kāñcīpūrṇa returned to his home. Desiring to go to Vaikuṇṭha, he renounced his ascetic form and adopted the form of a servant, heading towards Śrīraṅgam. There, he came into contact with Mahāpūrṇa, a disciple of Yāmunācārya and a devotee of Lord Raṅganātha. Kāñcīpūrṇa said to Mahāpūrṇa, "O

Lord! I have no support. I have come to serve you. All I ask is that you give me the food you leave behind."

Mahāpūrṇa accepted him and assigned him the task of caring for the cows. Kāñcīpūrṇa regularly tended to the cows and would take Mahāpūrṇa to bathe in the Kāverī river three times a day in an ox-cart. He also washed his clothes. One day, as Kāñcīpūrṇa was bringing Mahāpūrṇa back from the Kāverī bath in the evening, suddenly it began to rain. Kāñcīpūrṇa got completely drenched. He returned to the cow-shed, removed his wet clothes, and set them aside to dry. He had only one pair of clothes. At night, when there was no chance of anyone arriving, he wore his ascetic clothes, applied tilak, and began chanting Śrī Harināma (the holy names of the Lord).

Mahāpūrṇa knew that Kāñcīpūrṇa had only one pair of clothes. With the intention of giving him clothes, he proceeded towards the cow-shed. There, he saw Kāñcīpūrṇa wearing his ascetic clothes, applying tilak, and chanting Śrī Harināma.

Mahāpūrṇa immediately recognized Kāñcīpūrṇa and, bowing at his feet, asked, "Why have you come here as my servant?" Kāñcīpūrṇa explained the entire situation and said, "To reach Vaikuṇṭha, it is necessary to serve the devotees. Therefore, I have come to serve you." Mahāpūrṇa replied, "Do not serve me. I am not a devotee worthy of accepting your service. You should serve Lord Raṅganātha instead." After this, he assigned Kāñcīpūrṇa to serve Lord Raṅganātha.

A few days later, Lord Raṅganātha said to Kāñcīpūrṇa, "Kāñcīpūrṇa! My temple is constructed

in such a way that it remains cool even during the summer. The Kāverī river flows around my temple, keeping the area cool. Therefore, I do not need your cāmar service. Lord Varadarāja has emerged from the fire pit, and his place remains warm. Therefore, you should serve Lord Varadarāja. My service is complete even without you."

After being rejected for service by Lord Raṅganātha, Kāñcīpūrṇa went to Tirumalā and had the darśan of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. After staying there for some time, the devotees of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara gave him a cāmar and asked him to perform the cāmar service. While Kāñcīpūrṇa was performing the cāmar service for Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, the Lord himself said, "Kāñcīpūrṇa! My temple is situated among the mountains, and the place here always remains cool. Therefore, I do not need your cāmar service. Just as Lord Raṅganātha said, you should serve Lord Varadarāja." After being rejected for service by Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara as well, Kāñcīpūrṇa returned to Kāñcīpuram and began serving Lord Varadarāja. Pleased with his service, Lord Varadarāja said, "Now you are worthy of going to Vaikuṇṭha." After this, Kāñcīpūrṇa took initiation from Yāmunācārya and became his disciple.

Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya

Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya was born in the year 1017 in the village of Perumbudur, near Chennai. He was a great devotee of Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara. His guru was Yāmunācārya. He was a follower of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition, with its main center being Śrīraṅgam. Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya propagated this tradition through

holy pilgrimages while residing in Śrīraṅgam and so he could not serve Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara directly. He sent his disciple Anantācārya to Veṅkaṭācala (Tirumalā), where he served the Lord. Even today, the ācāryas of Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya's tradition are the ones who perform the worship of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya went to Tirumalā three times and served Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara.

Once, Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya was traveling with his disciples to have darśan of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in Tirumalā. They were passing through the village of Aṣṭasahasra. In that village, two of his disciples, a wealthy brāhmaṇa named Yajñeśu and a poor brāhmaṇa named Varadācārya, lived. Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya thought that it might be difficult for Varadācārya to arrange food for such a large number of disciples. Therefore, he sent a message to Yajñeśu that they would arrive in the village on a particular day.

Yajñeśu sent the messengers back without offering them any respect. When the disciples returned to Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya, they reported that Yajñeśu had not even given them water. Hearing this, Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya did not go to Yajñeśu's house but instead went to Varadācārya's house. Varadācārya, who relied on alms for his livelihood, had gone to the village to collect alms at that time. His wife, Kārpāra Lakṣmīdevī, was at home. Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya knocked on their door. Lakṣmīdevī called from inside, "I do not have suitable clothes." Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya threw his uttarīya (upper garment) through the window. Lakṣmīdevī put on that garment, opened the door, and laid out a mat for everyone to sit on. Then she offered them cold water.

Afterward, Kārpāra Lakṣmīdevī went to a local shopkeeper and said, "Our Guru, Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya, has come with his disciples to our home. I need ingredients to make prasāda (holy food) for them."

The shopkeeper replied, "If you fulfill my wish, I will give you the ingredients." Lakṣmīdevī was unsure of what to do. She thought for a moment and then told the shopkeeper, "First, give me the ingredients so I can satisfy my Guru and his disciples with prasāda. Afterward, I will fulfill your wish." The shopkeeper agreed and gave her the ingredients.

Lakṣmīdevī prepared the food, offered it to the Śālagrāma, and then served the prasāda to Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya and his disciples. Once everyone had taken the prasāda, Varadācārya returned home. His wife, Lakṣmīdevī, narrated the entire incident. Upon hearing this, Varadācārya said, "For the service of the Guru, you have earned eternal fame at the cost of this perishable body." He praised Lakṣmīdevī for her devotion.

Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya came to know of this incident through his divine vision. He instructed Varadācārya to give the ucchiṣṭa (the prasāda that they had consumed) to the shopkeeper. Varadācārya gave the ucchiṣṭa to his wife and told her to give it to the shopkeeper. Lakṣmīdevī went to the shopkeeper and said, "First, you should consume this Mahāprasāda." As soon as the shopkeeper consumed the Mahāprasāda, all his sins were destroyed, and his body and senses were purified. The shopkeeper fell at Lakṣmīdevī's feet and sought forgiveness for his sins.

Afterward, Lakṣmīdevī took the shopkeeper to Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya and narrated the entire event. The shopkeeper offered obeisances with full prostrations to Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya, sought forgiveness for his faults, and requested to become his disciple. Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya forgave him and accepted him as his disciple.

Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya said to the shopkeeper, "Since Varadācārya is living in great poverty, provide him with some wealth." However, Varadācārya replied to Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya, "O Lord! Knowledge, wealth, and family are enemies of devotion, so I do not want wealth." Hearing this, Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya was very pleased.

When Yajñeśvara learned that Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya had not come to his house but had gone to Varadācārya's house, he went to him, prostrated before him, and asked, "Gurudev! Why did you not come to my house?" To this, Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya replied, "My disciples informed you that I was coming, but you, by not honoring them and refusing the hospitality, have denied me service. Therefore, I did not come to your house." Yajñeśvara said, "O Lord! What you say is true. In my happiness at your arrival, I forgot about them, but this was not out of arrogance. Please forgive me and come to my house to accept my service." Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya responded, "I will first have the darśan of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in Tirupati, and then, on my return to Srīraṅgam, I will accept your service." With that, he set off for Tirupati.

News of Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya's arrival in Tirupati reached Tirumalā Nāmbi, who set out to meet him,

bringing the Tīrtha Prasāda of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. When Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya saw Tirumalā Nāmbi, he said, "O Lord! Why have you come yourself? You could have sent a lesser devotee?" Tirumalā Nāmbi replied, "There is no devotee smaller than me on this mountain, so I have come personally with the prasāda of Lord."

Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya was staying at the temple of Nammāḻvārs in Kapil tīrtha within Tirupati. According to legend, Tirumalā mountain is the incarnation of Ādiśeṣa. Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya accepted Tirumalā mountain as the embodiment of Ādiśeṣa and decided not to place his feet on the mountain. Upon hearing this, Anantācārya came down from the mountain, prostrated before Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya, and said, "Gurudev! Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, who is established on Tirumalā mountain, is worshipped by Śaivas as Lord Śiva and by the Śakti worshippers as Durgā. But the Āḻvārs have written many praises and prayers, worshipping Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in the form of Lord Viṣṇu. The prayers of the Āḻvārs are taking the form of araṇya rudaṇa (forest weeping). Therefore, you should climb the mountain and, with the proofs from the scriptures, establish that Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara is indeed Mahā-Viṣṇu, thus making the prayers of the Āḻvārs true. O Gurudev! If you are not worthy of climbing the mountain, then how can I? Why was I sent to Tirumalā to offer flowers and Tulasi leaves to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara?"

Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya, to fulfill Anantācārya's wish, tied cloth around his knees and, crawling on his knees, climbed the Tirumalā mountain. He bathed in Swami Puṣkariṇī and then had the darśan of Lord Varāha

along with Bhūdevī. He circumambulated the temple of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, offered his obeisances, and had darśan. After this, he gathered the Śaiva and Śāktavādi devotees and presented scriptural evidence, stating, "Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara is neither Durgā nor Lord Śiva, but he is indeed Mahā-Viṣṇu as stated in many Purāṇas. Therefore, only Lord Viṣṇu should be worshipped here."

Even after this, the Śaiva and Śāktavādi devotees asked, "If He is Lord Viṣṇu, why does He not have the conch and discus?" Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya replied, "During the battle between Toṇḍamān and Vasudāsa, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara gave His conch and discus to Toṇḍamān and helped Vasudāsa. Therefore, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara does not have the conch and discus."

However, the devotees did not accept this explanation. That night, Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya placed the sword of Durgā Devi, the ḍamaru and trident of Lord Śiva, and the conch and discus of Lord Viṣṇu before Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in the deity room. He then locked the temple doors and said, "We will all stay here. If the sword is accepted, it will signify Durgā Devi; if the Damaru and trident are accepted, it will signify Lord Śiva; and if the conch and discus are accepted, it will signify Lord Viṣṇu." All the devotees agreed to this condition.

Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya entered the deity room in the form of Ādiśeṣa that night and adorned Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's hands with the conch and discus. The next morning, when the temple doors were opened, it was found that Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara had accepted the conch and discus. After this event, the Śaiva and

Śāktavādi devotees left the Tirumalā mountain. Because Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya had adorned Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara with the conch and discus, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara recognized him as his guru. Therefore, in Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya's thousand names, one name is that of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's guru.

A king, on his way to Rāmeśwaram, went to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's temple for darśan and instructed his servants to construct a pavilion around the temple. On his return journey, the king noticed how much the pavilion had been completed. That night, he dreamt of a serpent. The next day, when the king went for darśan, he saw that the serpent had coiled around Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's shoulder. The king ordered a golden serpent ornament to be made and told the priest to place it on Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's shoulder. The priest replied, "Serpent ornaments are only placed on Lord Śiva's shoulders, so I cannot place it on Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara."

However, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara appeared to the priest in a dream and said, "I reside on Ādiśeṣa. Ādiśeṣa is dear to me. Therefore, you should place the serpent ornament made by the king on me." The priest then placed the serpent ornament on Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara as per his wish.

When Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya saw that the serpent ornament was placed on only one shoulder of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, he asked the priests why this was so. They explained the entire event. Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya thought that the ornament would not look proper on just one shoulder, so he had a second serpent ornament made and placed it on the other shoulder as well. Thus,

even today, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara is adorned with the serpent ornament on both shoulders.

Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya arranged for flowers and turmeric-kumkum offered to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara to be sent to Padmāvatī Devī (Lakṣmī Devī) at Tiruchāṇūru once a year. He also arranged for the flowers worn by Godā Devī after Sankrānti to be offered to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and for Godā Devī's marriage to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. Additionally, during Dhanurmāsa (December-January), instead of the usual Suprabhātam sung in the morning, the recital of Tiruppāvai written by Godā Devī was arranged. At the time of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's floral decoration, the singing of Divyaprabandham[37] was also arranged.

Before Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya's arrival at Tirumalā, the Brahmotsavam was celebrated for only the first day in Tirumalā, while the remaining nine days were observed at Tiruchāṇūru. On learning this, Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya arranged for the entire ten-day festival to be held in Tirumalā.

In the forests of Tirumalā, there was a deity of Lord Yoga Nṛsiṃha. Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya installed this deity of Lord Nṛsiṁha in the Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara temple and arranged for daily worship and offerings. Due to his yogic posture, this deity became known as Lord Yoga Nṛsiṃha.

Śrī Anantācārya

Among the foremost householder disciples of Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya was Anantācārya. He was born in 1053

37 The four thousand songs composed by the twelve Āḻvārs.

and was 36 years younger than Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya. Anantācārya resided in Tirumalā, where he created a self-made well and a flower garden behind his house for the service of Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara. His deity and samādhi (memorial) are also located there. Anantācārya authored works such as the "Veṅkaṭācala Itihāsa Māla" in Sanskrit, along with "Rāmānuja Catuṣlokī" and "Godā Catuṣlokī."

Once, while speaking about Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya asked his disciples, "We know that Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara loves flowers. Nammāḻvār has mentioned in a kīrti that Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara is very fond of flowers. So, who among you will go to Tirumalā and offer flowers to Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara?"

In response, Anantācārya stood up and said, "Gurudev, I will go and offer flowers to Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara." Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya was extremely pleased and gave him permission. With the blessing of Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya, Anantācārya went to Tirumalā to serve Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara. After having the darśan of the deity, he built a small hut in Tirumalā.

To grow the necessary flowers and Tulasi plants for the service of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, Anantācārya was digging a well with his wife. It was during this time that Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, in the form of a child, decided to help them. He approached Anantācārya and said, "I am a boy from the Koḷa tribe who lives on this mountain. I have heard about you, and I will help you."

Anantācārya replied, "You cannot do this work. It is a service that our Gurudev has given, and I will do it

myself. You may go." The child form of Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara then left.

Despite this, Anantācārya continued digging the well. He filled the earth into a basket and handed it to his wife. She was about to throw the basket far away when Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, in his child form, approached her and said, "You are pregnant, and such hard labor should not be done by pregnant women. Give me the basket, and I will throw it for you."

Anantācārya's wife replied, "My husband has already refused your help. If I accept your help, we will both be scolded by him. So, please leave." The child form of Lord reassured her, saying, "Your husband is inside the well. The help I provide will not be visible to him. Therefore, there is no need for you to be afraid."

Under the influence of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's divine māyā, Anantācārya's wife accepted the child's help.

The Pastime with Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara

With the help of Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara in the form of a child, Anantācārya completed the service quickly. He noticed that his wife had returned even before he could fill the second basket with soil. Surprised, Anantācārya asked, "Earlier, you were always late, but now you are back even before I have filled the basket. What is the reason for this?"

Without telling any lies, his devoted wife truthfully explained everything. In a fit of anger, Anantācārya came out of the well. Upon seeing his anger, Supreme

Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, in the form of a child, understood that he would be punished, so he fled from there.

Anantācārya chased the child, determined to catch him. While running, Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara looked back, and Anantācārya, in his rage, struck the child with a crowbar. The strike (crowbar) landed on the lower lip of Lord, causing blood to flow. Despite the injury, Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, in his child form, entered the temple and vanished from sight. Anantācārya could not continue chasing and returned.

Meanwhile, in the temple, blood began to flow from the lower lip of the deity of Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara. Seeing this, the temple priests, alarmed, approached and asked, "O Lord! Why is this blood flowing?"

Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, explaining the incident, said, "To stop this blood, apply green camphor. In remembrance of the divine play by Anantācārya, apply green camphor daily in the same manner."

Following Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara's instructions, the priests applied camphor as prescribed. After learning of the incident, Anantācārya, deeply remorseful, offered Aṣṭāṅga Praṇāma (full prostration) to Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara and sincerely sought forgiveness for his mistake.

The Pastime of Preparing the Garland

Once, Anantācārya was preparing garlands of flowers. During this time, Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, through the temple priest, called for him. Upon hearing that Lord was calling, Anantācārya said to the priest, "I

will come, you go ahead." He then took a little longer in preparing the garlands of flowers and Tulasi.

When Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara met him, he asked, "Why did you take so long?" Anantācārya replied, "O Lord! I was preparing the garlands of flowers and Tulasi, so I was delayed in coming."

Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara then asked, "Which is more important to you? Am I more important, or are the garlands of flowers made for me?"

Anantācārya humbly replied, "O Lord! When flowers bloom fully, their fragrance fades away quickly. Therefore, our Guru, Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya, instructed us to prepare the garlands only when the flowers have not yet bloomed. When you called me, I was in the process of preparing the garlands. If I had left the task unfinished and come to you, the flowers would have bloomed and lost their fragrance. Hence, I made sure to complete the garlands properly and then brought them to you."

The Pastime of the Snake Bite and Unwavering Devotion

Once, while Anantācārya was plucking flowers in his garden, a snake bit him. Despite the pain, he continued his work without delay, as he did not want there to be any hindrance in offering the flowers to Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara. He carefully prepared the garland and set off to the temple.

When Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara saw him, he remarked, "You have been bitten by a snake, haven't you? You should immediately take medicine."

Anantācārya humbly responded, "O Lord! Every moment, the 'snakes' of anger, greed, pride, envy, and desire bite me. What is the significance of this snake's venom? Even if I were to die from this venom, I will go to Vaikuṇṭha and serve you there. And if I survive, I will continue serving you here."

The Pastime with the Ants and the Offering

On another occasion, Anantācārya was traveling from Tirumalā to Śrīraṅgam to have the darśana (divine vision) of his guru and Lord Śrī Raṅganātha. He carried with him the prasāda (sanctified offering) offered to Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara. While on his journey, he opened the prasāda bag and found that ants had infested it.

Recalling the prayer of Kulaśekhara Mahārāja, who had wished, "O Lord, I desire to be born as a humble being on this mountain," Anantācārya reflected, thinking that perhaps some great devotees had been born as ants. With this thought, he decided to leave the prasāda on the Tirumalā mountain and continued his journey to Śrīraṅgam, thereby demonstrating humility and deep reverence for the devotees of the Lord in any form.

Once, some devotees became tired while climbing the Tirumalā mountain. At that moment, Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, disguised as a devotee, approached them and said, "I am Anantācārya's disciple. A devotee, who saw you all tired on the mountain, informed Anantācārya about you. Anantācārya has sent the pulihora (tamarind rice) prasāda, offered in Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara's naivedya, for you." Saying this,

he gave the prasāda to the devotees and left. The devotees accepted the pulihora prasāda. After reaching Tirumalā, they met Anantācārya and said, "The pulihora you sent was very good" and thanked him. Anantācārya replied, "I did not send anyone. Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara Himself came as my disciple and gave you His offering."

Once, Parāśara Bhaṭṭa's disciple came to him and inquired about the characteristics of devotees. Parāśara Bhaṭṭa said, "There is Anantācārya in Tirumalā. You go to him and learn." Following his words, the disciple went to Tirumalā, met Anantācārya, and told him the entire story. Anantācārya asked him to stay there for a few days.

Once, a festival of Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara was held, in which many devotees and monks participated. After the festival, the devotees sat down to receive prasāda. Among them was the disciple sent by Parāśara Bhaṭṭa. Anantācārya told him to stand up and distribute prasāda. After distributing the prasāda, he sat down with those devotees who were receiving prasāda for the second time. Anantācārya told him to stand up again and distribute prasāda. He distributed prasāda again and sat down with those who were receiving prasāda for the third time. Anantācārya asked him to stand up once more and distribute prasāda. He distributed prasāda and sat down with the devotees who were receiving prasāda for the fourth time.

After the festival concluded, Anantācārya called him and said, "You asked me what the characteristics of a devotee should be, I will tell you." Then he said, "A devotee should be like salt, a heron, a hen, and like

you." The disciple took permission from Anantācārya and went to Parāśara Bhaṭṭa, explaining the entire incident in detail. He then said, "I did not understand the answers he gave me." Parāśara Bhaṭṭa then said to his disciple, "Among the six tastes, salt is one. These six tastes never lose their essence. No one eats vegetables made without salt. Everyone praises the cooked vegetables, but does not appreciate salt. Salt gives flavor to vegetables but does not claim any glory. Similarly, a devotee should practice the nine types of devotion to Bhagavān sincerely, but should not seek praise for their own qualities."

"The heron stands in the water for the fish. If it eats small fish, then the larger fish do not approach it. Therefore, it waits until the larger fish come, and when it sees them, it catches and eats them. Similarly, a devotee should not desire the worship, benefits, prestige, accomplishment of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga, attainment of heaven, or positions like Indra and Lord Brahmā while practicing devotion. They should only desire the attainment of Vaikuṇṭha.

"The hen searches for food in the dust. Similarly, a devotee should understand the true meaning of all the scriptures and follow them.

"Just as you were not affected by the insult caused by Anantācārya, a devotee should not be affected by their own respect or disrespect."

One night, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara went to Anantācārya's flower garden to play with Lakṣmī Devī. Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara picked beautiful roses from there and

gave them to Lakṣmī Devī. Similarly, Lakṣmī Devī picked beautiful roses and gave them to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. Thus, both of them played in the flower garden throughout the night and left as soon as the Brahma Muhūrta (early morning) arrived.

When Anantācārya came to the garden in the morning to pick flowers, he saw that all the beautiful flowers were plucked. Seeing this, he became very sad. He made a garland of the remaining flowers in the garden and offered it to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. The next night, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, along with Lakṣmī Devī, again came to the garden, played with the flowers, and left at Brahma Muhūrta. Anantācārya became very sad again. On the following night, they came once more, played with the flowers, and left again at Brahma Muhūrta. Anantācārya became very sad once more. The next night, he decided that he would catch them by any means and, thinking this, he started to keep watch in the garden during the night. Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara again came with Lakṣmī Devī and took all the beautiful flowers, but Anantācārya could not see either Lakṣmī Devī or Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara.

This went on for eight days. On the ninth day, Anantācārya prayed to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara that whoever came to pick flowers from his garden should be made visible to him. That day, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and Lakṣmī Devī came to the garden riding a horse, appearing as a king and queen. Seeing this, Anantācārya said to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, who appeared as a king, "You look like a king. Does it befit you to destroy the flowers grown for God?" and tried to bind him. Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, after freeing himself, fled on the horse. As soon as Lord

Veṅkaṭeśvara ran away, Anantācārya caught Lakṣmī Devī, who appeared as the queen, and bound her with the vines of the trees. Anantācārya said to Lakṣmī Devī, "Your husband will come for you, and then I will give him advice." Lakṣmī Devī replied, "My husband has many wives like me, so he will not come for me. I am like your daughter, please release me." But Anantācārya did not release Lakṣmī Devī.

The next morning, when the door of the Tirumalā temple was opened and the priests entered, they saw that Lakṣmī Devī was not in the heart of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. The priests asked Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, "O Lord! Where has Lakṣmī Devī gone?" Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara replied, "Last night, I was walking with Lakṣmī Devī in Anantācārya's flower garden, and Anantācārya tried to catch me. I managed to escape and return, but Lakṣmī Devī was captured and remained there." The priests went to Anantācārya's flower garden and informed him about the incident. By then, Lakṣmī Devī had transformed into a deity there. Anantācārya placed Lakṣmī Devī in a basket and brought her to the temple, placed her in Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's heart, and sought forgiveness from him.

In memory of this divine pastime, even today, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and Lakṣmī Devī are taken to Anantācārya's garden and worshiped. At Tirumalā, a garland of flowers offered to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara is also offered as a prasāda at Anantācārya's samādhi, and blessings are given with Śaṭhagopa. Similarly, on Anantācārya's birth anniversary, worship is performed in the same manner. It is said that a Pogḍa tree sprouted

from Anantācārya's samādhi, and this tree is considered to be Anantācārya himself.

Śrī Vedānta Deśikan

Vedānta Deśikan was born in 1268 in a village named Tūpul, near Kāñcipuram, Tamil Nadu, to the couple Anantasūri and Tautārāmbā. His birth name was Veṅkaṭānāthan. Four hundred years earlier, Vīrarāghavācārya had established the Vedānta Deśikan temple at the Lord Govindarāja temple.

Since Anantasūri and Tautārāmbā had no children, they constantly prayed to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara at Tirumalā for a child. One day, Anantasūri had a dream in which Veṅkaṭācālpati appeared in the form of a child and handed him a bell, saying, "Have your wife swallow this bell, and you will be blessed with a son." After saying this, Veṅkaṭācālpati vanished.

The next morning, Anantasūri shared the dream with his wife, who confirmed that she had the same dream. Surprised, both of them were amazed by this coincidence.

When the bell could not be found in the temple, the priests informed the authorities. Veṅkaṭācālpati himself revealed to the officer of Rāmānuja's lineage how the bell had disappeared. The chief officer listened to the story from the sacred couple and was astonished. Tautārāmbā held the bell for twelve years, and then Vedānta Deśikan was born.

Vedānta Deśikan came to Tirumalā and served Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara for many years. He composed a work

called 'Dayāśataka' in praise of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, consisting of 108 verses. The meanings of some of these verses are as follows:

"The juice of sugarcane is very sweet. When it is boiled, it turns into sugar. Similarly, the mercy of Śrīnivāsa melted and became the Veṅkaṭāgiri mountain. I bow to that Veṅkaṭāgiri. The water from the lake of Śrīnivāsa's mercy flows through the Śaṭhagopa, Nāthamuni, Yāmunācārya, and other Ācāryas of this tradition who bathe in it. Since the Vedas are in Sanskrit, only a few can benefit from them. The essence of those the Vedas was presented by the Āḻvārs in the form of Divya Prabandham. The Āḻvārs took refuge in the mercy of the Supreme Person. I bow to such Āḻvārs. Like Bhāgīratha, who brought the Ganga river from heaven and saved his ancestors who had been reduced to ashes due to the anger of Kapila Muni, similarly, sages like Parāśara Muni composed the Lord Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Rāmāyaṇa, Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, and other scriptures, and by immersing people like me, who are ignorant of the knowledge of Lord Lakṣmī-Kānta Śrīnivāsa, in the divine Ganga of His mercy, made them worthy of reaching Vaikuṇṭha.

"Just as water from a large lake reaches the fields through a canal and saves the crops from drying up, in the same way, the mercy of Viśvaksena Śrīnivāsa comes and removes all obstacles, distributing that mercy and protecting everyone. I bow to such Viśvaksena. Just as a mother nourishes her child with milk, the mother of all beings, Lakṣmī Devi, nourishes us with the milk of knowledge and sends us to Vaikuṇṭha. O Mercy Goddess of Śrīnivāsa, you bring joy to Śrīnivāsa, the

lord of Anjanādri mountain. I pray before you that you protect me from my sins. O Goddess of Mercy residing with Śrīnivāsa, it is said by the learned devotees that you liberate even the most hardened sinners from their sins."

"O Goddess of Mercy! The reason why Śrīnivāsa is called compassionate is because of you. Therefore, everyone takes refuge in you, except Śrīnivāsa. Upon seeing you, sins flee in fear. When the souls forget Śrīnivāsa's commands, Śrīnivāsa becomes angry. To calm His anger, He takes refuge in you. O Goddess of Mercy! To fill your vast belly, I have committed numerous sins. O Goddess of Mercy! You have not filled your stomach by consuming large sins, but you are seeking out those who commit smaller sins. How can you survive in such a way? (That is, O Goddess of Mercy! You are extremely kind. I have committed great sins, and if you show mercy by destroying my sins, it will bring you satisfaction). O Goddess of Mercy! I am the king of sinners, and you are the queen of virtues. It is dangerous for two kings to be in one place. Therefore, please defeat me and lead me to the feet of your husband, Śrīnivāsa."

"O Goddess of Mercy! According to your will, the Lord appears in different incarnations to prevent the souls from taking countless births due to their sins and to protect them. The Vedas describe many righteous deeds and the Supreme Lord. But people with limited intelligence, after performing virtuous acts, are drowned in the ocean of worldly existence. O Goddess of Mercy! Those who possess your mercy, abandon worldly deeds and, freed from the bonds of this world,

engage in the service of the Lord. Just as the clouds bring water from the ocean and shower it as rain to delight all beings, O Goddess of Mercy! In the same way, you bring all the virtues from the ocean of Śrīnivāsa and distribute them to all the people coming to Tirumalā. O Goddess of Mercy! Just as the Cātaka bird does not drink water from lakes, ponds, or rivers but quenches its thirst only with the rainwater, in the same way, the devotees who know the essence of the Vedas do not take refuge in the demigods, but only in you, reaching the feet of Śrīnivāsa."

Śrī Prativādi Bhayaṅkara Aṇṇan

Prativādi Bhayaṅkara Aṇṇan was born in 1361 in a village called 'Hastigiri Nāthar Aṇṇan' near Kāñcipuram in Tamil Nadu. He received initiation from the Ācārya named Maṇvāla Mahāmuni of the Śrīsampradāya. This Maṇvāla Mahāmuni is considered an incarnation of Ādiśeṣa.

He composed the Veṅkaṭeśvara Suprabhātam with 29 verses, the Veṅkaṭeśvara Stotram with 11 verses, the Veṅkaṭeśvara Prapattiḥ with 16 verses, and the Veṅkaṭeśvara Maṅgalaśāsanam with 14 verses. These hymns are recited when waking Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in the early morning.

Meaning of some verses of the Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara Stotram

"O Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara! You embraced Śrīdevī, whose kumkum (sacred vermilion) on her body made Your own body red. As the leader of this world, may

You be victorious and victorious. You are the Lord of all demigods, including Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and Kumārasvāmī. Out of compassion, You protect the surrendered ones. O Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, protect me too. O Śrī Hari, I have committed countless sins many times. Forgive those sins and protect this fool immediately. O Lord, You are the one who grants more blessings than what is requested. The Vedas acknowledge Your greatness, stating that You are superior even to Lord Śiva and Lord Lord Brahmā."

"O Lord Gopāla! Due to the enchanting sound of your flute, the gopīs gather around You. You, endowed with the beauty of millions of Kāma (Cupid), are the one who delights all the gopīs. O Vāsudeva! You alone are my refuge. O Daśarathī! You are exceedingly dear and captivating to Sītā Devī, the daughter of Bhūmi Devī. For the darkness represented by Rāvaṇāsura, You are like the Sun. O Raghurāma, the noble one! I seek Your refuge, protect me. O Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara! having come from afar, I have served Your feet with devotion. If I have served You even once, may the fruit of that service be mine forever."

Meaning of some verses from the Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara Prapattī

"I bow to Lakṣmī Devī, the consort of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, who is the deity governing this world, who enhances the endurance of the Lord, who holds a lotus in her hand, and who is seated in the Padmāsana posture. Lakṣmī Devī, with her tender hands resembling soft lotus petals, presses the soft, lotus-like feet of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara with love and reverence. Yet, just as

marks appear on the skin from a gentle beating, those feet of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara that bear marks of red, I seek refuge in those feet. O Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara! the garland of fragrant flowers that You wear has become even more fragrant by touching Your feet. Seeing the beauty of those feet, I have come to take refuge in You."

"I take refuge in the sacred feet of Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, who is adorned with symbols like the flag, umbrella, nectar pot, thunderbolt, goad, lotus, Kalpavṛkṣa, conch, and discus. Every day, when Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and other demigods like Indra bow their crowns to these feet, the brilliance from the jewels on their crowns radiates like the auspicious āratī light. It is in such divine feet that I take refuge. O Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, You became the charioteer of Arjuna and gave him guidance, telling him, "Come to My refuge." Today, You stand here once again, gesturing with Your hands, saying, "Come to the refuge of My feet." I take refuge in Your holy feet."

The meaning of some verses from Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara Maṅgalāśāsana

"May Śrī Veṅkaṭācala Nivāsi Śrīnivāsa, the husband of Lakṣmīdevī, the giver of all desires, and the treasure of all auspiciousness, be blessed! May Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, who captivates all beings with His beauty and whose lovely eyes are filled with wonder while gazing upon Lakṣmīdevī, be auspicious! May that imperishable, faultless, Sat-cid-ānanda embodiment, endowed with supreme qualities, omniscient, and omnipotent Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara be auspicious!"

"May Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, who shows His feet to the whole of humanity, indicating them with His right hand, and who enhances His brilliance by wearing flower garlands, jewels, yellow silk, and weapons, be blessed! May Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, who prefers not to reside in Vaikuṇṭha, but delights in enjoying with Lakṣmīdevī on the banks of Swami Puṣkariṇī, be blessed! May Śrīnivāsa, who resides in the hearts of Maṇvālā Mahāmuni and all the worlds, be blessed! May Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, worshipped and praised by our Pūrācāryas, be blessed!"

For the Darśana Vidhi of Supreme **Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara Sūprabhātaṁ,** refer to page 53 of Chapter Three.

Śrī Annamācārya

In the village of Tāllapāka, there is a temple of Lord Cennakeśava, constructed by King Janamejaya. The priest of the Cennakeśava temple, Vithalayya, also worked in agriculture. He sent his only son, Nārāyaṇayya, to Vuṭākuru for education.

Nārāyaṇayya's teacher was known to have a nature similar to that of Durvāsā Muni, being short-tempered. Nārāyaṇayya had a weak memory, and due to the hardships imposed by his teacher, he thought about ending his life. While the villagers were discussing the serpent that lived in a termite mound near the temple of Cintālammā, Nārāyaṇayya overheard the conversation. With the desire to die from a snakebite, he ventured into the mound one night. Cintālammā appeared and asked, "Why do you want to die?" Nārāyaṇayya explained his situation and that of his teacher. Cintālammā blessed

him saying, "You will become a great scholar, and your grandson will be a devotee of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara." Over the time, Nārāyaṇayya became a scholar. After his marriage, he had a son named Nārāyaṇasūri.

Nārāyaṇasūri married Lakkamāmbā. This couple had no children, so they went to Veṅkaṭācalam and prayed to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, saying, "Grant us a son who will be your devotee." By the grace of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, on May 9, 1408, Lord Viṣṇu Khadga (Nāndaka) was born to them as their son. Nārāyaṇasūri named the newborn son Annamayya.

Annamayya's mother, Lakkamāmbā, and the elders of the house would narrate stories of the Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa, Bhāgavata, and the glories of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara to him. Annamayya would often wander around with his friends while playing. At the age of eight, one day, Annamayya's parents sent him to cut grass, giving him an axe. While cutting the grass, Annamayya accidentally injured his thumb. At that time, some devotees were going to Veṅkaṭācalam, and Annamayya joined them. He bathed in the various holy places of Veṅkaṭācalam and eventually went to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's temple. There, he began praising the qualities of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara.

When Annamayya disappeared, his parents searched for him and eventually reached Veṅkaṭācalam. Upon finding Annamayya, they asked him to return home, but he refused. Nārāyaṇasūri then prayed to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, saying, "Please tell my son to return home and get married." That night, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara appeared in Annamayya's dream and said, "Return

home, get married, and spread the word about Me." Following Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's instructions, Annamayya returned home and, after a few years, married two girls, Akkalammā and Tirumalāmmā.

Annamācārya traveled around Andhra and Tamil Nadu, spreading the message of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara.

Annamācārya learned Vaishnava philosophy and received initiation from Śrī Śaṭhogopa Muni at Ahoḅila. Annamācārya composed a hymn in praise of his guru, Śrī Śaṭhogopa Muni, in the following manner:

"O Śaṭhogopa Muni, the one who shows the path to liberation, the one easily approachable for devotees, and beloved of Śrī Hari, I bow to you. I worship you, who have deep devotion to Śrīraṅganātha, Lord Varadarāja, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, and the Lord Narasiṁha Deva of Ahoḅila."

Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara Kīrtana

Annamācārya composed many hymns in praise of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. Some of the sentiments of these hymns are as follows:

"The one with eyes like lotus and a beautiful body shining with a smile, the supreme abode. He carries the Nāndaka Khadga shining on His silken dhoti, a lotus in His navel, a conch and discus in His hands, the Kaustubha gem on His chest, a necklace of radiant jewels around His neck, golden chains, prominent arms, a garland of white pearls, a crown adorned with diamonds—Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara is supremely adorned with all beauty."

"O Veṅkaṭeśvara! Your name alone is enough to fulfill all my desires. Your holy feet (caranāmṛta) are

enough to purify me. Your grace is enough to remove my sins. Your service is enough to make me great. The marks of your tilak on my body are enough to save me. Just remembering You is enough to bring me joy. When You can save me in every way, why should I seek anyone else?"

"O Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara! The dawn is arriving. Wake up to listen to our strange desires. Demigods and sages have come to serve You. (Open Your lotus-like eyes to accept their service). Gandharvas, Kinnaras, and Yakṣas are praising You. (Wake up to hear their hymns). Ādiśeṣa, Tumburu, Nārada, and Lord Brahmā, etc., are waiting to pay obeisance to Your lotus feet. (Wake up to accept their obeisances). Jaganmātā Alamelumaṅga is waiting to be seen by Your eyes—wake up to see her."

"Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's arms grant fearlessness to many. The arms that returned the Vedās to Lord Brahmā in the Matsya (Fish) incarnation, the arms that lifted Mount Mandara on His back in the Kūrma (Tortoise) incarnation, the arms that embraced Bhudevī in the Varāha (Boar) incarnation, the arms with sharp nails in the Narasimha incarnation, the arms that received a charity from Cakravartī Bali in the Vāmana (Dwarf) incarnation, the arms that gave charity to many in the Parashurāma incarnation, the arms that summoned the ocean with an arrow in the Rāma incarnation, the arms that carried the plow in the Balarāma incarnation, the arms that touched the Gopīs in the Kṛṣṇa incarnation, and the arms that hold the sword in the Kalki incarnation."

"Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara grants blessings like mountains. He gave liberation to the potter devotee (Bhiṁ), who

made pots; He went there when called by Toṇḍamān, lifted the soil dug by Anantācārya, listened to the prayers of Tirumala Nambi, and called the devotee Tirukkācci Nambi of Kāñci Lord Varadarāja. Anyone who remembers Him, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara will mercifully protect them."

"O Nārayāṇa! I bow to You. You, who are praised by Nārada Muni and Lord Śiva, the destroyer of the demon Mura, the bearer of the Mukunda Mani, the beloved husband of Śrīdevī, the one who has Garuḍa as His vehicle, the one with a lotus-like navel, the supreme among men, the one who liberates from all bonds—I bow to You. You, who hold the Sun and the Moon as Your eyes, who are praised by Lord Brahmā, who lies in the Kṣīrasāgara (Ocean of Milk), who bound Bali Cakravartī, the beloved of the Gopīs, the supreme among all the worshipable deities, the one praised by the four Vedas—O Veṅkaṭeśvara! The one who showers His grace upon me, I bow to You."

"Lord Brahmā washed the feet of Veṅkaṭeśvara (performed the Abhiṣeka). The feet that measured the earth in the Vāmana incarnation. The feet placed upon the head of Bali Cakravartī. The feet that spread across the sky. The feet that saved Indra. The feet that eradicated the sins of Ahalyā. The feet that danced on the head of the Kāliya Nāga. The feet served by Lakṣmīdevī. The feet that saved the yogis. The steadfast feet on the noble Veṅkaṭāgiri that grant liberation."

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Kīrtan

Annamācārya composed many hymns dedicated to Kṛṣṇa. The essence of some of these hymns is as follows:

"Yaśodā mātā gave birth to a son at midnight. He suckled Pūtana's milk and sucked away her life air along with it. He grazed the cows, broke the Śakat (cart) with a kick, brought down the Yamala Arjuna trees, lifted a hill with His little finger, and performed the Rāsa Līlā with the Gopīs. He is the one who holds the flute, suppresses the arrogance of Kāliya Nāga, destroys Kaṃsa, rules over the demigods, and displays His dominion. He takes care of 16,000 queens."

"O Yaśodā Mā, do not rock the body of Kṛṣṇa, for doing so would cause the world settled in His stomach to shake. The milk is boiling, move Kṛṣṇa away from it. When we lift our little Kṛṣṇa by holding His slender waist, the world in His stomach will be pressed, so do not do it. O Mā, lull Kṛṣṇa to sleep in the cradle without troubling Him. In Veṅkaṭācala, do not scold Veṅkaṭeśvara (Kṛṣṇa) with harsh words."

"O Kṛṣṇa! You lifted the Govardhana hill with Your little finger, yet the gopīs could not understand Your power and kept accusing You. This little Kṛṣṇa, born from Devakī, came to grow up with Yaśodā. The creator of the fourteen worlds, Lord Brahmā, considers this child Kṛṣṇa as his father. Several times, Kṛṣṇa flew and broke butter pots from the roofs of houses. One Gopikā went to hit Kṛṣṇa, but another Gopikā said, 'O Mother! Do not hit Kṛṣṇa. How can you hit such a beautiful Kṛṣṇa upon seeing Him?' In the evening, Kṛṣṇa, having eaten butter from all the houses in the village, would return home. The gopīs complained about Kṛṣṇa. Hearing the complaints of the gopīs, when Yaśodā Mā would get angry and go to beat Kṛṣṇa on his return in the evening,

Kṛṣṇa would say, 'Mother! Mother! Do not hit me. I have done nothing wrong!' Saying this, Kṛṣṇa would hold onto Mā Yaśodā's feet. Many times when the gopīs came to complain about Kṛṣṇa, He would pretend to be innocent and continue drinking milk by Mā Yaśodā's side. The ultimate cause of all this is that Kṛṣṇa has now manifested as Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in Veṅkaṭācala.

"Seeing little Kṛṣṇa asleep in the cradle, the gopīs would come near and start rocking it. The young gopīs, near the golden cradle, would sing lullabies to the sleeping infants, singing 'Lālī Lālī Lālammā.' The gopīs, with eyes like lotus petals, would make a soft jingling sound with their anklets, and upon finding Veṅkaṭeśvara (baby Kṛṣṇa), they would dance with joy."

Śrī Rāma Kīrtana

Annamācārya composed many hymns dedicated to Rāma. The sentiment of one of those hymns is as follows:

"O Rāma! The one who, by threatening the ocean, delighted Lakṣmaṇa. The one who broke Lord Śiva's bow and married Sītā. The one who protected Sugrīva and ruled over the kingdom of Kosala (Ayoḍhyā). The one who protected the sacrifice of Viśvāmitra Muni, O son of Kauśalyā! O Rāma, victory to You! Victory to You! The one who destroyed his enemy, Rāvaṇa. The one born in the Sūrya vaṁśa (solar dynasty). The one who, by holding the bow, protected the sages. The one who redeemed Ahalyā. The one praised by Pārvatī, the wife of Lord Śiva. The one who, by his valor, killed Mārīca. The beloved of Lava and Kūṣa. The one endowed with great virtues, Rāma.

"O Rāma, who always resides in my heart! The one more beautiful than Kāmadeva! The one who eternally dwells in the hearts of the devotees! The one who resides in the beautiful Ayoḍhyā, now manifests before us as Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. We bow to that Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and serve Him."

About Śrī Harināma

Annamācārya composed many hymns dedicated to Śrī Harināma (the holy name of God). The sentiment of some of these hymns is as follows:

"Veṅkaṭeśvara, Your name alone is our foundation. That is our accumulated wealth. Your name alone clarifies the distinction between the soul and You. Veṅkaṭeśvara, Govinda, Śrīdhara, Padmanābha, Dāmodara, Kṛṣṇa, I bow to Your names."

"All mantras are contained within the Veṅkaṭeśvara mantra. Nārada Muni always extolled the Nārāyaṇa mantra. The son of Hiraṇyakaśipu, Prahlāda, received the Nṛsiṁha mantra. Vibhīṣaṇa received the Śrī rāma mantra. Dhruva received the Vāsudeva mantra. Arjuna received the Śrī Krṣṇa mantra. Vyāsa Deva's son, Śuka, recited the mantra 'Om Namo Nārāyaṇāya' after seeing Lord Nārāyaṇa before him. Through my guru, Śṭhagoṗa Muni, I have received the Veṅkaṭeśvara mantra, as bright as the moon."

"Devotees! In times of hunger, exhaustion, captivity, or when faced with difficulties, the name of the beautiful and radiant Śrī Hari is the only path. No other path exists. In times of distress, when dishonored by others, when committing sins, or when filled with fear, the name of

Śrī Hari is the path. Even if you search for another path apart from Śrī Harināma, no other destination will be found. When bound by chains, threatened with death, or persecuted by creditors, the name of Veṅkaṭeśvara alone delivers freedom from all hardships. If you foolishly search for another mantra, you will find no other path."

"The name of Veṅkaṭeśvara, which destroys the hardships, anger, and troubles of the devotees, brings joy to all. Śrī Harināma protects all living beings. Therefore, always chant the Śrī Harināma, which is superior to the Vedās. Śrī Harināma is accessible to everyone. It grants liberation. Lord Brahmā always chants Śrī Harināma. Pārvatī, the daughter of Himavān, constantly remembers Śrī Harināma in her mind. Is the nectar of Śrī Harināma not enough for you? What could be more delicious than this? To be free from birth and death, to remove ten thousand hellish pits, to eliminate poverty and faults, to dispel the darkness of sins, Śrī Harināma is sufficient, just like the Kalpavṛkṣa (wish-fulfilling tree)."

Teachings about Kali Yuga

Annamācārya wrote a hymn on the teachings about Kali Yuga as follows:

"In this Kali Yuga, all education is limited to the day. (The education of this life is for this life, the education of the next life is for the next life). The previous generation studied to understand Veṅkaṭeśvara. The education of Kali Yuga is for the purpose of forgetting Veṅkaṭeśvara. The education of Kali Yuga serves to disrespect the

Creator (God). Brāhmaṇas studied to have the vision of Veṅkaṭeśvara. The education that gives wealth and material pleasure is for the purpose of forgetting Veṅkaṭeśvara. Any education that cannot establish Lord Viṣṇu in the heart is futile."

Spiritual Hymn

Annamācārya composed several hymns that imparted spiritual knowledge. Some of the themes of these hymns are as follows:

"To whom does the living man belong? Who becomes what? This soul (Jīva) has been born as the son of many people in past lives. It has been born as the daughter of many people. It has been born as the relative of many people. In this life, it causes sorrow to many people. In the next life, it will also cause sorrow to many. Where does this soul wander? How many places has it been born and how many people has it made its relatives? Where will this soul go in the next life? Upon reflection, it is understood that the soul has no permanent place. The bodies worn by the soul are destroyed, but the soul (Jīva) is indestructible. Due to the māyā of Veṅkaṭeśvara, this soul takes many births, becoming a son, brother, father, grandfather, and so on."

"Birth is the truth, death is the truth, and the life in between is a drama. There is food to eat, there are clothes to wear. The struggle for these two is also a drama. Whose soul is this? What does it become? Therefore, by knowing the soul and this world, attain liberation."

"Like the dreams seen in sleep, wealth is temporary. Family love is like the flash of lightning in the sky. O

mind! Do not become a slave to temporary pleasures. This world will perish. This world entices everyone with illusion. The body will grow old, but the mind will remain youthful and continue to generate desires. O mind! Every evening is death, every morning is birth. O soul! If you are content, even a little will be satisfying. If there is no contentment, even if the whole world is gained, it will not be enough. O soul! Fulfilling the desires of youth is not in your control. No matter how much water is there in a pond, the lotus plant rises above it. Similarly, however much power you have, your desires will be greater than that. Even after working throughout your life, desires will not be fulfilled. Therefore, abandon material desires and take refuge in Lakṣmīpati (Veṅkaṭeśvara)."

"Veṅkaṭeśvara! I have grown very tired in this journey of life (having lived so many days). I no longer have the strength to continue this journey (life). Now, you alone save me. My desires will not be fulfilled without your blessings. The chains of sin and virtue bind this soul. You break those chains of sin and virtue and grant liberation."

The ruler of Penugonda, Sālva Narasiṃha Rāya, had appointed Annamācārya as his guru in his court. Annamācārya used to sing hymns in praise of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and Padmāvatī Devī. Upon hearing these hymns, Narasiṃha Rāya asked Annamācārya to compose a hymn in praise of him as well. Annamācārya, closing his ears while chanting "Hari! Hari!" said, "The tongue is meant for praising Lord Nārāyaṇa, not for the praise of humans."

Upon hearing these disrespectful words, Narasiṃha Rāya had Annamācārya bound in chains and imprisoned. While in prison, Annamācārya prayed to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and sang hymns. Miraculously, the chains broke apart. The soldiers reported this to the king, who came to witness the event and found the chains lying on the ground. The king himself then bound Annamācārya again, and once again the chains broke. Realizing his mistake, the king fell at Annamācārya's feet and sought forgiveness. Annamācārya forgave the king and advised him not to disrespect devotees in this manner.

Instead of staying with the kings, Annamācārya decided to go to Tirumalā and serve Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, living among the devotees.

Annamācārya's Hymn on Devotees' Fulfillment Beyond Kings and Wealth

"We are devotees of Lord Viṣṇu, and thus we are wealthy from birth. We do not need the wealth of kings who receive their positions. We have taken refuge in the husband of Lakṣmī Devī, so we have no need for the wealth of others. They do not need to give us wealth. All the possessions on this Earth come from Bhūdevī, who is the wife of Lord Nārāyaṇa. We are the servants of Lord Nārāyaṇa, and therefore, Lord Nārāyaṇa will protect us and make us prosperous with all wealth. The positions in this world are given by Lord Brahmā, whose father is Lord Nārāyaṇa. Lord Nārāyaṇa is our true Lord. We do not need the lords appointed by Lord Brahmā.

O devotees! No matter how many Purāṇas and Śāstras you read, you will never find any mention of the destruction of a Lord Viṣṇu devotee."

Annamācārya composed 32,000 hymns, which were inscribed by his sons on copper plates and preserved in the Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara temple. The room where these hymns were stored was called Saṅkīrtana Āra.

"Earlier, the wedding celebration of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara used to take place at the time of the festival itself. Annamācārya made arrangements for the Nitya Kalyāṇam (the perpetual wedding ceremony). To begin this Nitya Kalyāṇam, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara addressed Annamācārya as 'Mama' (Uncle). Annamācārya attained Vaikuṇṭha (the sacred place) by leaving his physical body at the age of 95 in 1503."

Śrīpādarāja Tīrtha (Śrīpādarāyalu)

The birth of Śrīpādarāja Tīrtha of the Madhva Sampradāya took place in 1412 in the village of Abbur in Karnataka, to the couple Giriammā and Śeṣagirīyappa. His birth name was 'Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa' and his sannyāsa name was 'srīpādarāja Tīrtha'. The ruler of Candragiri, Śālva Narasiṁha, requested Śrīpādarāja Tīrtha to serve Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in Tirumalā. Śrīpādarāja Tīrtha accepted the request and entrusted the responsibility of serving Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in Tirumalā to his trained disciple Vyāsa Tīrtha. Śrīpādarāja Tīrtha had the opportunity to have darśana (sacred vision) of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara several times and composed many kīrtanas. Some of the sentiments expressed in his kīrtanas are as follows:

"O Veṅkaṭeśvara, who resides in Śeṣācala and grants darśana! Your Harinām is the adornment for my tongue, walking to your sacred abode is the adornment

for my feet, listening to your kathā (divine story) is the adornment for my ears, serving you is the adornment for my hands, respect is the adornment for human beings, wisdom is the adornment for the sages, Tulsī Van (sacred grove of Tulasi plants) is the adornment for your temple, and serving one's husband is the adornment for a devoted wife."

"O Veṅkaṭeśvara, who destroys sins! Victory to you, victory to you. O Veṅkaṭeśvara, who displays glory! Victory to you, victory to you. O Veṅkaṭeśvara, who resides with Lakṣmī Devi! Victory to you, victory to you. O Veṅkaṭeśvara, father of Lord Brahmā! Victory to you, victory to you. O Veṅkaṭeśvara, who protected Gajendra! Victory to you, victory to you. O Veṅkaṭeśvara, whose beautiful form enchants everyone! Victory to you, victory to you."

"Śrīnivāsa, you grant darśana to the wise (devotees), but you do not grant darśana to the ignorant (non-devotees). You shine in the hearts of your devotees, uplift them, take countless incarnations for the sake of the mortal beings, and you destroy the sins of those who remember you, liberating them from the cycle of birth and death."

Śrī Vyāsa Tīrtha

Vyāsa Tīrtha was born in 1447 in the village of Bannūr in Karnataka, to the brāhmaṇa couple Mallan and Akkāmmā. He took sannyāsa from Brahmaṇya Tīrtha of the Madhva Sampradāya. His sannyāsa name was 'Vyāsa Tīrtha'. The ruler of Candragiri, Śālva Narasiṁha, requested Śrīpādarāja Tīrtha of the Madhva

Sampradāya to take responsibility for the service of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in Tirumalā. Śrīpādarāja Tīrtha accepted the request and sent his trained disciple, Vyāsa Tīrtha, to Tirumalā. Following the wish of Śrīpādarāja Tīrtha, Vyāsa Tīrtha served Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara for 12 years. Vyāsa Tīrtha praised Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara as follows:

"The feet of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara are the abode of bliss. Those feet are adorned with golden chains. All should have darśana of those feet and offer worship to them."

"With conch and discus in two hands, with the third hand signaling refuge to all, and with the fourth hand offering the boon of fearlessness."

"Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, shining like a ruby, wearing a crown on His head, tilaka on His forehead, earrings in His ears, Śrīvatsa and Kaustubha Mani on His neck, adorned with golden ornaments, wearing a silken yellow cloth, possessing a form so beautiful that it attracts even the millions of Kāma (god of love), I offer my devotion to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara."

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu

God incarnates in this material world in every Yuga. No one gives the command for God's incarnation. God takes incarnation out of compassion for the living entities. Even learned scholars cannot understand how God can incarnate on Earth. However, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the Bhagavad-gītā, "For the protection of Dharma, for the protection of the pious, and for the destruction of the wicked, I appear in every age." The incarnations of God are described in the scriptures and accepted by the Ācāryas.

Unfortunately, in this Kaliyuga, some impostors deceive the general public by saying, "I am God," pretending to be God. People who are deprived of the knowledge of scriptures are being deceived by their words. The Lord Viṣṇu Purāṇa says, "No one has more power, wealth, fame, beauty, knowledge, and renunciation than God." One who claims to be God must possess these six qualities in full. If these six qualities are absent, such a person should be considered a fraud.

When unable to recognize God based on the scriptures, we will have to go to hell with such hypocrites. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself incarnated as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Even though Caitanya Mahāprabhu was God Himself, He incarnated as a devotee to experience the bliss of devotion and teach others devotion. Therefore, this incarnation is called the hidden incarnation or the unknown incarnation.

The fruits that are obtained by meditating on Lord Viṣṇu in Satya yuga, by performing yajnas in Tretā yuga and by serving the feet of the Lord in Dvāpara yuga, the same fruits can be obtained in Kaliyuga simply by Saṅkīrtana (chanting). The Śrīmad Bhāgavatam explains that the Yugadharma (religious duty of the age) in Kaliyuga is the Saṅkīrtana of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra: "Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare." This Saṅkīrtana was initiated by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

The followers of the tradition of Caitanya Mahāprabhu spread this Saṅkīrtana movement throughout India. In this tradition, Bhaktivedanta Swami established the

International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness (ISKCON) in 1966 in New York City and spread the Saṅkīrtana movement globally.

The Purāṇas describe Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu as follows

During the name giving ceremony of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Garga Muni told Nanda Mahārāja, "Your son appears in every age. He who appeared in the previous ages in white, red, and yellow forms has now appeared in the form of Kṛṣṇa." (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.8.13).

Prahlāda Mahārāja, while praising Lord Nṛsiṁha in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, described Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu as follows: "O Lord! In this way, You appear in the forms of man, animal, sage, deity, fish, tortoise, etc., maintaining all the worlds and destroying the demons. O Lord! According to the age, You protect the Dharma. But in Kali Yuga, You will not declare Yourself as the Lord, and thus You will be known by the name Triyuga."[38] (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 7.9.38) In Kali Yuga, wise people will worship the incarnation of the Lord who glorifies Kṛṣṇa through Saṅkīrtana (chanting). This incarnation of the Lord will not have a black complexion. He will be Kṛṣṇa Himself. He will have followers with Him. (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.5.32)

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's Names and Their Meanings (Mahābhārata - Anuśāsana Parva - Lord Viṣṇu Sahasranāma):

Suvarṇa Varṇa - One who has a golden-yellow complexion.

38 one who appears in three ages

Hemāṅga - One who has a body that shines like gold.

Varāṅga - One with excellent limbs.

Sannyāsa-kṛc Chamaḥ - One who accepts the path of renunciation.

Niṣṭhā Śānti Parāyaṇa - One who teaches devotion to the Lord while seeing all living beings with equal vision."

The demigods praised Lord Nārāyaṇa in this way: "O Lord Nārāyaṇa! You, showing compassion to the fallen souls in Kali Yuga, will appear in a golden form as the son of Śacīdevī, and, while practicing devotion, You will teach everyone the path of devotion." (Bhaviṣhyottara Purāṇa - Pratisarga 4.9.32)

The Purāṇas describe Śrī Kṛṣṇa's incarnation, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who appeared in 1486 in Māyāpur, located in present-day Bengal in the house of the brāhmaṇa couple Jagannātha Miśhra and Śacīdevī. The birth name of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was Viśvaṁbhara. He first married Lakṣhmīpriyā. After Lakṣhmīpriyā's passing, He married Lord Viṣṇupriyā.

Just as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, being the Supreme Lord, accepted Sāndīpani as His Guru to provide a role model to general people, similarly, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, though being the Supreme Lord, took initiation in the Śrī Harināma Mantra from Iśhwarapuri, the disciple of Mādhavendra Purī, for instructing general people. At the age of 24, He took sannyāsa from Keśava Bhārati and His sannyāsa name was Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu, while performing Harināma Saṅkīrtana, converted many Māyāvādīs into devotees of Kṛṣṇa. He spent 24 years in Puri. The pastimes of Caitanya Mahāprabhu are elaborately described in the texts Caitanya Bhāgavata, Caitanya Caritāmṛta, and Caitanya Maṅgala.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu made Jagannāth Puri His residence and performed pilgrimages. While bathing in the holy ponds of various sacred places and having darśana of their deities, He visited Tirupati to have darśana of Lord Kodandārāma and then went to Tirumalā to have darśana of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara.

After having darśana of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara at Tirumalā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu proceeded to Śrī Kālahasti and had darśana of Śrī Kālahastīśhwara there.

Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu

Five thousand years ago, Ādi-Śeṣha incarnated as Balarāma. The same Balarāma incarnated as Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu in the village of Ekācakrapura in Birbhum district of present-day Bengal in 1473, born to the brāhmaṇa couple Haḍāi Paṇḍita and Padmāvatī Devī. During their exile, the Pāṇḍavas stayed for some time in Ekācakrapura, and it was at that time that Bhīma killed Bakasura.

Nityānanda Prabhu's birth name was Kubera Paṇḍita. He and his friends would constantly engage in playing the pastimes of the Rāmāyaṇa, Bhāgavata, and the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Because of his constant

remembrance and enjoyment of these pastimes, he came to be known as Nityānanda.

Once, a sannyāsī, while on a pilgrimage, arrived as a guest at the home of Haḍāi Paṇḍita in Ekācakrapura. Haḍāi Paṇḍita served the sannyāsī with great hospitality. As the sannyāsī was about to depart, he asked Haḍāi Paṇḍita, "Can you send your son with me?" Haḍāi Paṇḍita, unable to refuse, sent his son Nityānanda with the sannyāsī. At the age of twelve, Nityānanda Prabhu left with the sannyāsī, and they visited several sacred places before reaching Paṇḍharpur. At that time, Mādhavendra Purī was also on pilgrimage there. Nityānanda Prabhu took initiation from Mādhavendra Purī. From there, Nityānanda Prabhu continued his journey, visiting various holy places and eventually reaching Veṅkaṭācala, where he had darśana of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara.

Later, under the leadership of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Nityānanda Prabhu accepted the householder's life and, while practicing devotion to Kṛṣṇa, propagated the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The pastimes of Nityānanda Prabhu are described in detail in the texts of Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Caitanya Bhāgavata, and Caitanya Maṅgala.

Śrī Vallabhācārya

Vallabhācārya was born in 1479 in the village of Campāraṇya in the Raipur district of Madhya Pradesh to the brāhmaṇa couple Lakṣmaṇa Bhaṭṭa and Elammā.

After the birth of Vallabhācārya, Lakṣmaṇa Bhaṭṭa moved to the village of Kāṅkarvāḍa (or Kaṅkarvāḍa),

which is currently located on the banks of the Kṛṣṇa River in the Kṛṣṇa district of Andhra Pradesh. When Vallabhācārya was 11 years old, Lakṣmaṇa Bhaṭṭa, along with his wife Elammā and Vallabhācārya, traveled to Tirumalā to have the darśana of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. After the darśana of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, Lakṣmaṇa Bhaṭṭa returned to Back Home back to Godhead from Tirumalā, while Vallabhācārya returned to his ancestral village with his mother. During his pilgrimages, Vallabhācārya visited Tirumalā with his disciples, where he bathed in Swami Puṣkariṇī and had darśana of Lord Śrī Varāha and Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara.

Śrī Vādīrāja Tīrtha

Vādīrāja Tīrtha, a prominent figure of the Madhva tradition, was born in 1480 in the village of Huvinkere, located near Udupi in Karnataka, to the couple Gauri and Rāmācārya. Vādīrāja Tīrtha took sannyāsa (renunciation) from Vāgīśh Tīrtha. When he visited Tirumalā, he saw Tirumalā mountain as Śālagrāma and, with great devotion, climbed the mountain on his knees, offering a Śālagrāma garland to Śrīnivāsa.

Vādīrāja Tīrtha composed several hymns in praise of Śrīnivāsa, two of which are as follows:

"Śrīnivāsa, who resides on the luminous Veṅkaṭā Mountain, always protect me! All the demigods are servants of Śrīnivāsa. Śrīnivāsa, standing on the high mountain, watches over His devotees and protects them. Holding the conch and disc in two hands, with the third hand pointing towards his feet and with the fourth hand offering blessings of fearlessness, Śrīnivāsa

declares, 'Whoever remembers my feet, I will help him cross this ocean of birth and death.'"

"Nārayāṇa, who lies on Śeṣanāga, now stands on Śeṣācala to protect His devotees. In His Rāma incarnation, He accepted the service of Śeṣanāga in the form of Lakṣmaṇa, and in His Kṛṣṇa incarnation, He honored Śeṣanāga in the form of Balārāma. Among Nārayāṇa's devotees, Śeṣanāga is the foremost. Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, like other demigods, are servants of Śrīnivāsa. Veṅkatagirīnātha (Śrīnivāsa) is the root cause of all causes. There is no one who can be compared to Śrīnivāsa, who relieves the sufferings of all beings. O Śrīnivāsa! Just as You saved Draupadī in the court, listen to my prayer and save me as well."

Śrī Purandara Dāsa

Purandara Dāsa was born in 1484 in Karnātaka, to the couple Varadappa and Rukmiṇī. Due to their childlessness, Varadappa and Rukmiṇī visited Tirumalā, where they had the darśan of Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara and prayed for a son. By the grace of Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, they were blessed with a son. Due to the divine grace with which he was born, the child was named 'Srīnivāsa.'

Purandara Dāsa composed 475,000 hymns, of which only about 1,000 are available today. Among these, some are dedicated to Supreme Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara, two of which are as follows:

"O Lord, who swiftly arrives on the Garuḍa to relieve the pain of Your devotees! Śrī Hari! Bhaktavatsala!

Please remove the fears and sufferings of my worldly life, O My Lord! I depend entirely on Your mercy and compassion. O Lord, Who takes the responsibility of creating, protecting, and destroying the beings of this universe! Understanding that You are the root cause of the operation of this universe and singing praises of Your infinite and holy qualities is truly delightful! Those devotees immersed in the nectar of chanting Your thousand names forget everything and do not allow their minds to wander into futile pursuits."

"O Lord! You, who made Vainteya (Garuḍa) Your vehicle! The destroyer of demons, O Lord with lotus-like eyes! The compassionate one who went as a messenger to the court of Duryodhana and pleaded for the Pandavas! Please cast Your merciful glance upon me and save me!

O Śeśādri Śekhara Vibho! You who never fail in protecting Your devotees. O Jagadīśa! Please show me the right path and deliver me from this dire situation. Please help me cross over the ocean of material existence. The Lord residing on Veṅkaṭācala, Śrīnivāsa, enjoying the divine music of Nārada Muni, Tumburu, and the praises of his son Lord Brahmā, is granting us darśan in His blissful form, endowed with lotus-like eyes and the conch and disc."

Śrī Hāthīrām Bābājī

'Hāthīrām Bābājī' came from North India to Tirumalā. He was a great devotee. He was from a village named 'Krīdal, located about 36 kilometers away from Delhi. With his guru's permission, he traveled on pilgrimages and arrived at Tirumalā around 1500. "Hāthīrām Bābājī

would converse with Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and play Pāchik games with him. In these Pāchik games, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara himself would play along with Hāthīrām Bābājī. Hāthīrām Bābājī was honored as a great devotee of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara by all. The conversations made with Hāthīrām Bābājī included words from Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara that were not heard by anyone else." Some people went to Girīdhara Rāja, the ruler of Cittoor, and complained, saying, "Hāthīrām Bābājī is pretending to have conversations with Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara to show his importance. He himself plays both sides of the Pāchik game and claims he is playing with Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara."

Girīdhara Rājā and Hāthīrām Bābājī's Trial

Girīdhara Rājā summoned Hāthīrām Bābājī and told him the complaint, saying, "If you are truly a devotee of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, you must prove it. You will have to eat all the sugarcane in this room filled with sugarcane by tomorrow morning, with the help of Lord, or else you will be punished." He locked Hāthīrām Bābājī in the room filled with sugarcane. Hāthīrām Bābājī prayed during the night, saying, "O Lord! I cannot eat all this sugarcane. If I do not eat it, the king will punish me. But if the king punishes me, he will accumulate sin. That should not happen. People have falsely accused me, and only You can prove this." After praying, he fell asleep. During the night, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara appeared in the form of an elephant, ate all the sugarcane in the room, and roared. Hearing the roar, Hāthīrām Bābājī woke up and began to praise Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in His elephant form. The servants went to the king and reported, "There is a roaring elephant in the room

where Hāthīrām Bābājī is locked up." Girīdhara Rājā came, and as soon as he opened the door, the elephant ran out in front of everyone. Hāthīrām Bābājī continued to praise Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. The king understood that Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara himself, in the form of an elephant, had eaten the sugarcane. Girīdhara Rājā, recognizing Hāthīrām Bābājī as a true devotee, appointed him as the custodian of the Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara temple and accepted him as his guru.

Hāthīrām Bābājī served Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara in many ways. Every morning, he would offer fresh cow's milk and butter in the Suprabhāta-sevā of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. Even today, the disciples of Hāthīrām Bābājī bring gold-plated plates of milk and butter from the Hāthīrām Bābājī Math in Tirumalā and offer them in the Suprabhāta-sevā, which the priests of the temple then present to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara.

When people heard that Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara had himself appeared in the form of an elephant to protect Hāthīrām Bābājī, and that Girīdhara Rājā had accepted him as his guru, they began to flock in thousands to have a darśan of Hāthīrām Bābājī. Seeing the growing crowd of devotees at his Matha in Tirumalā, Hāthīrām Bābājī established the Lord Veṇugopāla temple between Gogarbha Tīrtha and Ākāśaganga on the Pāpanāśana Mārga. There, he began serving Lord Veṇugopāla. At that place, Hāthīrām Bābājī would eat only the leaves of a tree called Rāy. This tree still stands there, and its leaves can be eaten by devotees. On the day before Deepāvalī, Hāthīrām Bābājī took Jīvit Samādhi in the courtyard of the Lord Veṇugopāla temple. Every year, on the day of

Hāthīrām Bābājī's Jīvit Samādhi, the Laddūgopāla deity is brought from the Hāthīrām Bābājī Matha in Tirumalā and placed near his samādhi for the celebration and puja. Initially, Hāthīrām Bābājī was only known as 'Bābājī', but after Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara saved him in the form of an elephant, he became famous as 'Hāthīrām Bābājī'. 'Hāthī' means elephant, and 'Rāma' means the one who gives joy. Therefore, Hāthīrām means the one who, in the form of an elephant, brings joy to Bābājī.

Śrī Kanak Dāsa

Kanak Dāsa was born in 1509 in the village of Kāginel in Karnataka. While plowing the fields, Kanak Dāsa found gold. With that gold, he constructed a temple in his village and installed the deity of Ādi Keśava. He also initiated the worship method of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara of Tirumalā in this temple. Kanak Dāsa was a disciple of Vyāsa Rāya. Kanak Dāsa decided to go to Tirumalā and have darśan of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara.

One night, Lord appeared in the dream of the priest who was performing the rituals and told him, "My devotee Kanak Dāsa is coming. You should go to the base of the mountain and welcome him with prasād." The priest came to the foot of the hill and stood by the stairs, asking every person who approached, "Are you Kanak Dāsa?" When Kanak Dāsa arrived, he was also asked the same question. When he asked, "Why are you asking this?", the priests replied, "Last night, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara appeared in a dream and said that His devotee Kanak Dāsa is coming. We must welcome him with prasād. That is why we are asking everyone."

Thinking that they would honor him, Kanak Dāsa replied, "Behind those who are going ahead of me and ahead of those who are coming behind me, Kanak Das is coming," and continued his journey.

Kanak Dāsa arrived at Veṅkaṭācala, bathed in the various holy tīrthas there, and had darśan of Lord Varāha and Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. He prayed to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara: "O Śrī Hari! You are the liberator and Supreme Soul. I am but a sinful worm, born into human life. This body entangled in the web of māyā belongs to You. O Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, You are free. Please make me the servant of Your servants and release me from the bonds of birth and death."

Śrī Rāghavendra Swami

Rāghavendra Swami was born in 1595 in Bhūvanagiri, Tamil Nadu, to Timmanna Bhatt and Gopīkāmbā. Due to their childlessness, Timmanna Bhatt and Gopīkāmbā went to Tirumalā and prayed to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara for a child. By the grace of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, Rāghavendra Swami was born. As a mark of gratitude for Lord's grace, the couple named their son Veṅkaṭānātha.

Veṅkaṭānātha took sannyāsa (renunciation) from Sūdhīndra Tīrtha of the Madhva Sampradāya. His sannyāsa name was Rāghavendra Tīrtha, and he is known as Rāghavendra Swami. After taking sannyāsa, he traveled with his disciples, undertaking pilgrimages, bathing in various holy tīrthas, and having darśan of the deities. Ultimately, he reached Tirumalā to have darśan of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara.

Śrīkṛṣṇa Deva Rāya

Śrīkṛṣṇa Deva Rāya was born in 1509 in Hampi, Karnataka. He made two pilgrimages to Tirumalā and had darśan of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. As offerings to Lord, he donated a gem-studded crown, two golden plates, 25 silver plates, gold ornaments, numerous cows, and several villages.

Bhakta Śīromaṇi Tarigoṇḍa Veṅgamāmbā

Tarigoṇḍa Veṅgamāmbā was born in 1730 in the village of Tarigoṇḍa in the Vayalapāḍu Mandal, 80 kilometers away from Tirupati, to Maṅgammā and Kanāl Kṛṣṇayyā. After the birth of five sons, Kṛṣṇayyā visited Tirumalā Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and prayed for a daughter. By the grace of Lord, a daughter was born, and she was named Veṅkammā.

From a young age, Veṅkammā would listen to the Bhāgavata, Rāmāyaṇa, and the divine stories of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara from the elders at home. She practiced constant meditation on Lord and did not engage in much conversation, leading others to mistakenly believe that she was possessed by spirits. When she was twelve years old, she was married to a young man named Veṅkaṭācālpati, but he soon passed away, after which Veṅkammā returned to her village.

At home, she continued meditating on Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, composing devotional songs about Him and singing them with a melodious voice. Her devotion earned her the respect of all, and she came to be known as Veṅgamāmbā.

Veṅgamāmbā would daily visit the Hanumān temple in the village of Tarigoṇḍa, where she worshipped Lord Narasiṁha Deva, offering garlands made of Tulasi and flowers, and meditated on Him. The temple priest could not tolerate her presence and, in anger, told her, "You can go to any sacred place, but why do you always stay here and disturb our lives?" He then grabbed her by the hair and dragged her out of the temple. However, upon seeing the priest's fear, Veṅgamāmbā calmed down and, feeling divinely inspired, decided to move to Tirumalā to settle there. At that time, she was 21 years old.

Upon reaching Tirumalā, Veṅgamāmbā began spending her time in meditation, darśan of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, and singing kīrtan. To provide her with a place of residence, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara arranged for a hut to be built through His devotee Ātma Rāmdāsu. The kitchen of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara provided her with the necessary food supplies.

Veṅgamāmbā sang kīrtans in praise of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. Impressed by her devotion, the descendants of Annamācārya, who lived on the Tirumalā mountain, offered her a room in their house. Veṅgamāmbā accepted their offer, and she began growing Tulasi plants in the open space behind the house as part of her service to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara.

At that time, the British government had appointed Akkārām Dīkṣita as the chief priest of the Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara temple. Akkārām Dīkṣita's house was near Veṅgamāmbā's Tulasi garden, and he became envious of the respect the devotees showed to her. He would

throw garbage into her garden. Despite Veṅgamāmbā's repeated attempts to explain to him, he did not listen.

One day, while Veṅgamāmbā was meditating, Akkārām Dīkṣita intentionally threw garbage into her garden. Enraged, Veṅgamāmbā cursed him, saying, "You and your entire lineage will die, vomiting blood, at this very moment!" Immediately, Akkārām Dīkṣita and all the members of his family perished.

The British government appointed another priest, but this new priest also became envious of Veṅgamāmbā. During the Brahmotsavam, the temple priest criticized Veṅgamāmbā, causing her to stop visiting the Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara temple. On the ninth day of the Brahmotsavam, the Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's chariot stopped in front of Veṅgamāmbā's house. Despite all efforts, the chariot would not move. Coconut breaking, pumpkin smashing, and lemon cutting did not make the chariot move. The devotees realized that someone had committed an offense against Veṅgamāmbā, which had caused the chariot to stop in front of her house. The devotees asked Veṅgamāmbā for forgiveness and prayed her permission for the chariot to proceed.

Veṅgamāmbā approached the chariot, bowed to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, performed the ārati, and the chariot began to move once again.

Seeing the devotion and austerities of Veṅgamāmbā, many devotees began to come to see her, which caused distractions during her meditation. Veṅgamāmbā prayed to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, saying, "O Lord, please take me to Your divine realm!" Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara

replied to her, "There is a cave at Tumburu Tīrtha. Stay there, where no one can see you. Every night, come through the tunnel path to my temple and perform my worship."

Veṅgamāmbā followed the instructions of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and resided in the cave at Tumburu Tīrtha, coming to the temple every night to perform the worship of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. The temple priests noticed that the offerings placed for the night worship would mysteriously disappear by morning. They reported this to the temple authorities, who replied, "Veṅgamāmbā has not been seen for many days. She must be living somewhere in Tirumalā and secretly entering the temple at night to perform the worship. Do not be surprised."

One night, a priest decided to hide in the temple to observe. When Veṅgamāmbā came to serve Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, the priest saw her and fainted in fear. In the morning, the other priests helped him regain consciousness, and he told them about the entire incident.

Veṅgamāmbā's miracles continued, and one day, a man suffering from leprosy came to Tirumalā to seek Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's darśana. However, he was denied entry to the temple. Overwhelmed by his pain, he went to Tumburu Tīrtha to commit suicide. Before ending his life, he prayed loudly, "Govinda! Veṅkaṭeśa! Śrīnivāsa! Bālājī! Free me from the bonds of birth and death, O Lord!"

Hearing his prayer, Veṅgamāmbā came out of the cave, saw his pitiable state, and said, "Your leprosy will

be cured. But do not tell anyone about seeing me here. If you do, your head will split open and you will die." She asked him to close his eyes. When he did, he found himself outside the Swami Puṣkariṇī in Tirumalā, and his disease was completely cured. He never revealed how his leprosy was healed, and as a result, everyone began to honor him. However, a few days later, he shared the story of meeting Veṅgamāmbā at Tumburu Tīrtha, and immediately his head split open, and he died, just as Veṅgamāmbā had warned.

When the devotees learned that Veṅgamāmbā was at Tumburu Tīrtha, they began coming in large numbers to have her darśana. Unable to bear the crowd at Tumburu Tīrtha, Veṅgamāmbā returned to the vicinity of the Tirumalā temple. After a few days, Veṅgamāmbā prayed to Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, saying, "O Lord, I cannot bear the crowd of devotees anymore. Please take me to Your realm."

Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara replied, "Enter into living samādhi."

Veṅgamāmbā then established her samādhi in a Tulasi garden behind the house of the descendants of Aṉṇamācārya near the Lord Varāha temple in Tirumalā, and she entered the samādhi. Even today, her samādhi can be seen at this sacred place.

Śrī Tyāgarāju

Śrī Rāma's devotee Tyāgarāju was born in 1767 in the Kṛṣṇa district of Andhra Pradesh to the couple Rāmbrahmam and Sītāmmā.

Once, Tyāgarāju went on a pilgrimage with his disciples to have the darśana of Tirumalā Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. However, by then, the priests had closed the temple's curtain. Tyāgarāju's disciples prayed to the priests to open the curtain and allow them to have the darśana. The priests replied, "According to the scriptural rules, once the curtain is closed, it cannot be opened again."

Then, Tyāgarāju prayed as follows: "O Tirumalā Veṅkaṭāramaṇa! Remove the curtain of ignorance that is within me. O My Lord! O Supreme Person! Please remove the curtain of ignorance that leads one away from righteousness and liberation. This ignorance is like a hungry fish that goes to eat the bait and dies, like a fly that causes trouble while eating, and like the mind wandering towards insignificant people during meditation on Śrī Hari. Just as animals cannot recognize the hunter's trap and get caught, I too have been trapped in the net of ego and ignorance. O Veṅkaṭāramaṇa! Kindly bless me and remove this curtain of ego and ignorance from me, O My Lord!"

As soon as he sang this hymn, the curtain opened. All the devotees present, along with Tyāgarāju, had the darśana of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara and were overjoyed.

His Divine Grace Śrī Śrīmad A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda

His Divine Grace Śrī Śrīmad A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda was born in 1896 in Calcutta to the couple Rājani and Gaur Mohan De. He received Harinām Dikṣā from Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī

Goswami Prabhupāda and was initiated into Sannyāsa by Bhakti Prajña Keśava Swami. In 1966, he founded the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness (ISKCON) in New York City, USA.

kṛteyad dhyāyato viṣṇuṁ tretāyāṁ yajato makhaiḥ /
dvāpare paricaryāyāṁ kalau tad-dharikīrtanāt //

In satya (Kṛta) Yuga, the result of meditating upon Lord Viṣṇu; in Tretā Yuga, the result of performing yajñas; and in Dvāpara Yuga, the result of serving the Lord's feet can be attained in Kali Yuga only through the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahā-mantra. (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 12.3.52)

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare /
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare //
iti ṣoḍaśakaṁ nāmnāṁ kali kalmaṣa nāśanaṁ /
nātaḥ parataropāyaḥ sarva-vedeṣu dṛśyate //

The Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahā-mantra, consisting of 16 names, destroys all the faults of this Kali Yuga. There is no other simpler method to attain this, as seen in all the four Vedas. (Kalisāntaraṇa Upaniṣad 5-6)

Śrīla Prabhupāda preached based on the scriptures, stating that "The human birth is meant for understanding God, not for spending life like animals. God can only be understood through the path of bhakti." He spread this philosophy worldwide.

While promoting this message, Śrīla Prabhupāda traveled to Tirumalā from Hyderabad by airplane on April 25, 1974. The manager of the Tirumalā Tirupati Devāsthānam respectfully welcomed Śrīla Prabhupāda

and his disciples, providing them with two rooms for their stay.

At that time, 15,000 people came daily to Tirumalā to have a glimpse of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. As a result, it took a long time to wait for the darśana (vision) of the Lord. However, the Devāsthānam granted Śrīla Prabhupāda and his disciples special permission to go directly for Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's darśana. The devotees waiting for darśana were chanting, "Govinda Govinda." But when Śrīla Prabhupāda had darśana of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, he sang the kīrtana "Govindaṁ ādi-puruṣaṁ tamaḥ bhajāmi."

Afterward, while in his room, Śrīla Prabhupāda said to his disciples, "Although many people are preaching that 'there is no existence of God,' still millions of people are going to have the darśana of Bālājī. This is a proof of the faith people have in God. In fact, people come to the darśana of God for relief from their material difficulties or to seek wealth, but all of them are chanting the name Govinda."

Seeing the accommodation arrangements in Tirumalā, Śrīla Prabhupāda said to his disciples, 'We should also construct a temple like this one, with shining golden domes, dedicated to Bālājī.' When the disciples asked, 'Why is Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara called Bālājī?' he replied, 'The term "Bālājī" means a little child. Here, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara is referred to as "Bālājī" in the form of Lord Kṛṣṇa.'

One day, an officer from the Tirupati temple informed Śrīla Prabhupāda during their meeting,

'Forty lakh rupees come into the Hundī (donation box) every month.' When Śrīla Prabhupāda asked, 'How do you spend that money?' the officer replied, 'Most of it is used for the reconstruction of buildings.' Śrīla Prabhupāda said, 'Rebuilding the temple is good, but spreading the message of Kṛṣṇa worldwide is the best. "Bālājī" means Kṛṣṇa. The message of Kṛṣṇa should be spread. He, in the form of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, descended to teach us how to practice bhakti. Due to lack of preaching in London, the condition of many churches have deteriorated. Temples should only be constructed for the purpose of spreading the message of Godhead.'

Then, a nearby priest said, "We are constructing another temple where we will begin the practice of "Pañcopāsana" (a method suggested by Śankarācārya for worshiping five deities.)" Śrīla Prabhupāda, surprised, asked, "Did your Ācārya, Rāmānujācārya, ever recommend Pañcopāsana?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda visited the Bālājī temple in Tirumalā three to four times a day during his two-day stay. Each time, the priests took him directly to the deity room, allowing him the opportunity to have darśana of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, no matter how long it took.

One month after leaving Tirumalā, on 4 May, 1974 Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote the following letter from Bombay to the officials of Tirumalā Tirupati Devāsthānam :

> I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude for the kind treatment given to me and my disciples, members of the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement, during our recent two-day visit to Tirumala. The opportunity

you gave us to have darśana of Bālājī is something we will never forget. My followers from America and Europe are fully appreciative of this rare privilege. If possible, we hope to visit Tirumala again for darśana of Bālājī. We wish to construct a special cottage for our society members who visit Tirupati as pilgrims. If there is any land available for purchase or donation, kindly inform us. We would appreciate any advice you can offer in this matter. Again, we express our gratitude for your wonderful hospitality.

Yours faithfully,

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples met with the Tirumalā officials, the Devāsthānam offered a plot of land in Alipiri. Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples built the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda temple there.

Once, when Śrīla Prabhupāda met with seven ministers in Hyderabad, he had a discussion with them regarding Bālājī. The summary of their discussion is as follows: "Human life is meant for performing yajña (sacrifice) in order to understand God. Near you, in Tirumalā, there is the Bālājī temple. Bālājī receives a lot of income. That income should only be used for the satisfaction of Bālājī, not for other purposes. Many people are suffering due to the lack of knowledge of God, so that income should be used to spread the knowledge of God. People offer great wealth to Bālājī. That wealth should be used to spread the confidential knowledge of the Bhagavad-gītā throughout the world. This is

the purpose of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, 'Under My order, you all should become gurus and spread the teachings of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to others. Thus, follow the orders of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as given in the Bhagavad-gītā and Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. Try to deliver everyone by becoming a guru. If you preach the Bhagavad-gītā, India will attain greatness.' The wealth of 'Bālājī' should only be used for spreading devotion to Kṛṣṇa, not for any other profit. This is my request."

> Still, in India there are many devotees, many Kṛṣṇa conscious persons. Especially in this province, you are great devotees of Bālājī. Bālājī is Lord Kṛṣṇa, Bāla-Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, I wish that the government be conducted under the guidance of Bālājī, that is, under Lord Kṛṣṇa. This is my request. And the codes, orders, and regulations are all described in the Bhagavad-gītā. So if we follow the instruction of Bhagavad-gītā and accept... We accept, consciously or unconsciously. That is our Indian culture, Vedic culture. *(Conversation with Seven Ministers of Andhra Pradesh – August 22, 1976, Hyderabad)*

Śrīla Prabhupāda, while giving a lecture on the 15th verse of the 13th chapter of the Bhagavad-gītā, said:

"The Māyāvādīs believe that God has no specific form. If God does not have senses, then He is formless (nirākāra). Kṛṣṇa said that I can hear and see everything. This means that Kṛṣṇa has eyes, ears, legs, hands—all senses. The limbs of God are not material. We can only see material objects, which is why God has given us the opportunity to see Him in His Deity form, so that we can witness His divine form. Anyone who considers

the Deity form as just a stone or who sees the Guru as an ordinary person is like an ass, as mentioned in the scriptures. Great ācāryas like Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya and Madhvācārya established thousands of temples. Even today, thousands of people visit Tirumalā to have the darśan of Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara. Are they all fools? Do they go there just to see a stone? To see God in the deity form, we must first become devotees. Only then will we be able to see God in that stone."

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About Author

Introduction Śrīnivāsa Sevānanda Dāsa has served at the Tirupati ISKCON temple from 2004 to 2009 and at the Bhimavaram ISKCON temple from 2010 to 2012. In 2010, he received initiation from the highly revered Bhakti Vikāsa Swami and, following his instructions, participated in the "Harināma Sankīrtana" padyātrā across the state of Telangana from 2013 to 2020. This padyātrā reached the ISKCON temple in Bharuch, Gujarat, in 2021. He also joined the padyātrā in Bharuch and continues to serve in the padyātrā to this day.

Śrīnivāsa Sevānanda Dāsa

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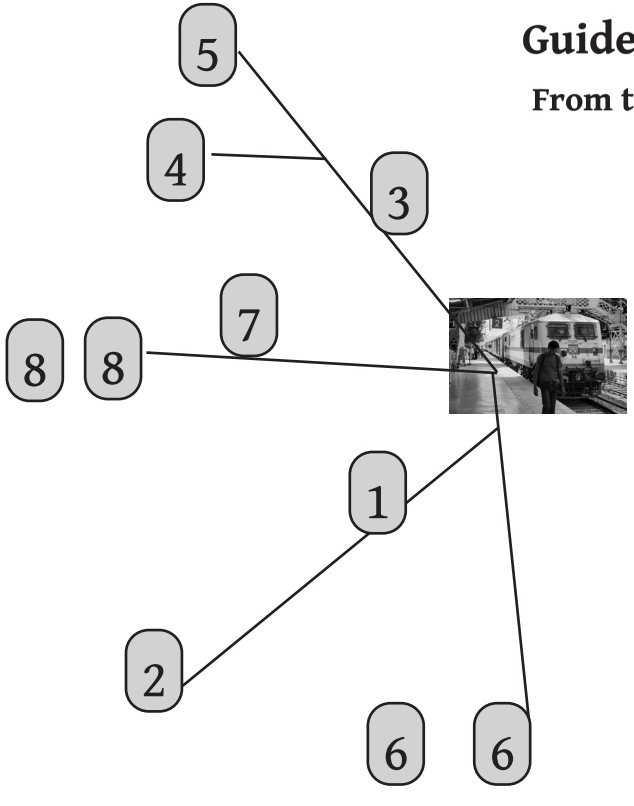
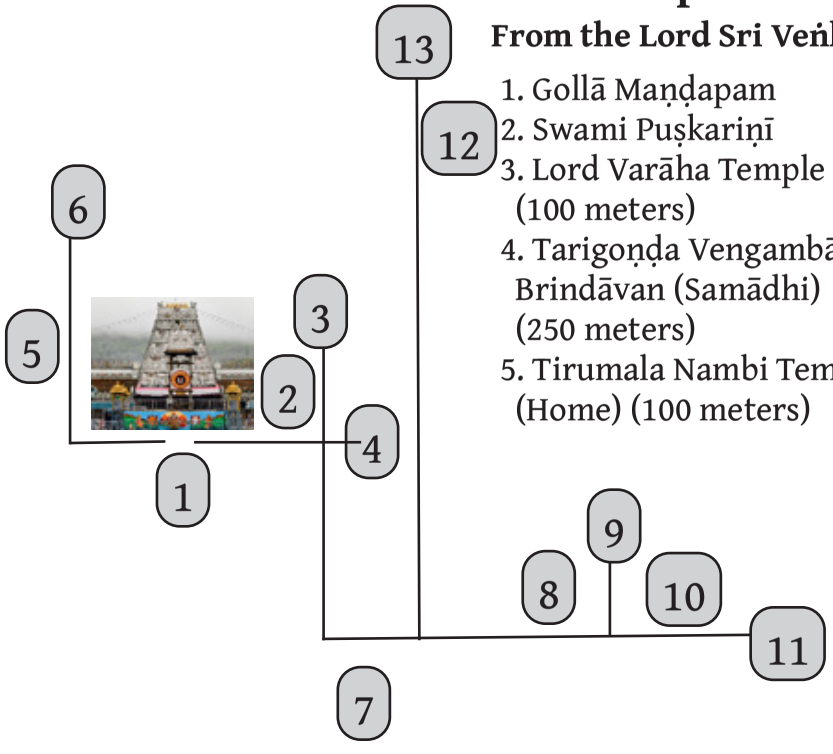
Guide map of sacred places in Tirupati

From the Railway Station:



1. Lord Govindarāja Temple (¼ km)
2. Lord Kodandarāma Temple (1 km)
3. Kapila Tīrtha (3 km)
4. ISKCON Rādhā-Govinda Temple (4 km)
5. Alipiri - Śrīvāri Pādālū (Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara Footprints) (4 km)
6. Padmāvatī Devī Temple - Padma Sarovara (6 km)
7. Śrīnivāsa Maṅgāpur (12 km)
8. Suvarṇa Mukhārī (Suvarṇa Mukhī) River and Agastyeśvarālayam (14 km)

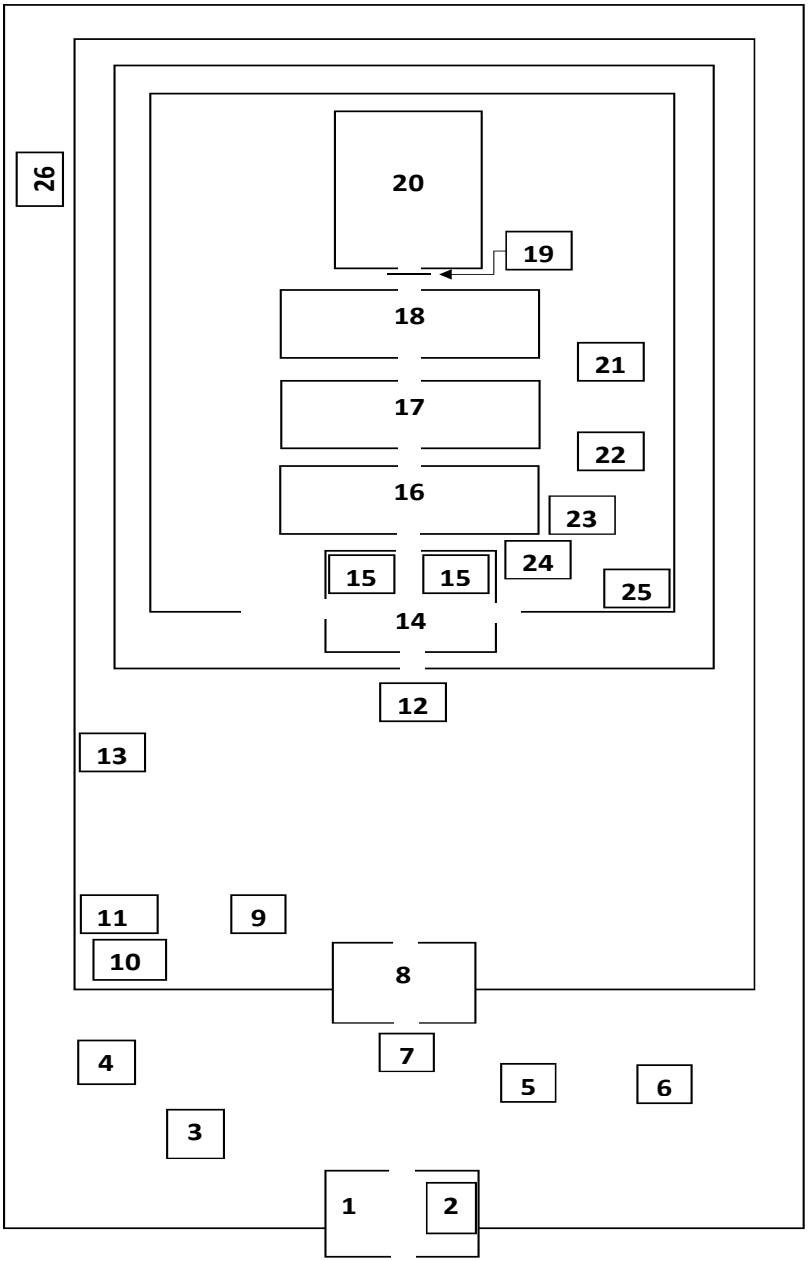
Guide map of sacred places in Tirumala



From the Lord Sri Veṅkaṭeśvara Temple:

1. Gollā Maṇḍapam
2. Swami Puṣkariṇī
3. Lord Varāha Temple (100 meters)
4. Tarigoṇḍa Vengambā Brindāvan (Samādhi) (250 meters)
5. Tirumala Nambi Temple (Home) (100 meters)
6. Anantācārya Brindāvan (Samādhi) (250 meters)
7. Tarigoṇḍa Vengambā Puṣpodyāna and Kuā (1 km)
8. Hāthirām Bābājī Brindāvan (Samādhi) (4 km)
9. Jābāli Tīrtha (5 km)
10. Ākāśagaṅgā Tīrtha (6 km)
11. Pāpanāśana Tīrtha (7 km)
12. Cakra Tīrtha (4 km)
13. Śrīvari Pādalū (Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara's Footprints) (6 km)

A Guide Map of the Prominent Sites in the Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara Temple



List of Prominent Sites in the Lord Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara Temple

1. Pradhāna Gopuram
2. Anantācārya Guṇapam (Anantācārya's crowbar)
3. Śrīraṅga Maṇḍapam
4. Tirumala Rāya Maṇḍapam
5. Addāla Maṇḍapam (Darpaṇa Maṇḍapam)
6. Phūla Bāvi (Flower Well)
7. Dhvajasthamba (Flagstaff)
8. Reṇḍava Gopuram (Second Gopuram)
9. Lord Varadarāja Temple
10. Vaṇṭaśāa (Kitchen)
11. Phūlagadi (Flower Room)
12. Garuḍa Temple
13. Vaṇṭa Bāvi (Well for the Kitchen)
14. Ghaṇṭa Maṇḍapam (Bell Maṇḍapam)
15. Jaya Vijay Dvārapāla (Victory Gatekeepers)
16. Snāpana Maṇḍapam (Abhiṣeka Maṇḍapam)
17. Rāmula Vāri Meḍa (Rama Darbār Stage)
18. Śayana Maṇḍapam (Sleeping Hall)
19. Kulaśekhara Paḍi (threshold)
20. Garbhagṛha (Sanctum Sanctorum)
21. Sankīrtana Āra
    (Annamācārya's Bhajana Collection Room)
22. Bhāṣyakāruḷu (Deity of Rāmānujācārya)
23. Viṣvakseṇa Temple
24. Huṇḍī (Donation Box)
25. Lord Yoga Nṛsiṁha
26. Kalyāṇa Maṇḍapam

is located half a kilometer from the Lord Govindarāja temple and one kilometer from the railway station.

Kapila Tīrtha

From the Varāha Purāṇa:

(Once, Lord Shiva visited Lord Venkateswara, worshipped Him, and praised Him. He then prayed, “Swami! Please grant me permission to reside in this sacred Venkatachala.” Lord Venkateswara replied to Shiva, saying, “Reside beneath the Venkatachala mountain in the southeast direction.”)

Beneath the Venkatachala mountain, in Pātāla (the netherworld), Sage Kapila used to worship a Shiva Lingam. Near this Shiva Lingam, Kapila Tirtha also existed. (As per Shiva’s wish, both the Shiva Lingam worshipped by Sage Kapila and the Kapila Tirtha emerged onto the surface of the earth.) In this Kapila Tirtha, divine beings (Devas) performed holy baths, worshipped Lord Shiva, and offered prayers. Lord Kapileshwara is considered the Kshetrapalaka (guardian deity) of the sacred Tirumala region.

Within the Kapila Tirtha complex, temples of Nammalwar, Venugopala Swami, Narasimha Swami, and Lakshmi Narayana are present. In the Nammalwar temple, Saint Ramanujacharya resided for a year. (During this time, he listened to the Ramayana 18 times from Tirumala Nambi.)

On the final day of the Brahmotsavam festival of Govindaraja Swami, the deity, along with Sri Devi and Bhu Devi, is brought to the Venugopala Swami temple at Kapila Tirtha. There, an abhishekam (ritual bathing) is performed, followed by adorning the deity with fine garments and jewelry, offering Naivedyam (sacred food), and performing worship. (Finally, the Sudarshana Chakra is bathed in the sacred waters of Kapila Tirtha in a ritual known as 'Chakra Snanam.')

Similarly, on the last day of the Brahmotsavam festival of Kodanda Rama Swami, the deity, along with Sita and Lakshmana, is brought to the Venugopala Swami temple at Kapila Tirtha. Here, an abhishekam is performed, the deity is adorned, Naivedyam is offered, and worship is conducted. (Finally, the Sudarshana Chakra is bathed in the Kapila Tirtha waters, marking the conclusion of the festival.)

ISKCON Rādhā Govinda temple

The founder of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness (ISKCON), Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, visited the Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara temple in Tirumalā in 1974. Upon witnessing the grand arrangements at Tirumalā, he told his disciples, "We should also build temples like the Bālājī temple, equipped with excellent facilities and a golden gopuram."